

# DAGGERS of FAITH

THIRTEENTH-CENTURY  
CHRISTIAN MISSIONIZING  
AND JEWISH RESPONSE

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## **Acknowledgments**

A number of words of appreciation are in order. I would like to thank the President and Fellows of Harvard College for permission to reprint segments of two articles that appeared in *The Harvard Theological Review*, the Medieval Academy of America for permission to reprint segments of a paper that appeared in *Speculum*, and Picard for permission to reprint segments of a study that appeared in *Les Juifs au regard de l'histoire: Mélanges en l'honneur de Bernhard Blumenkranz*. A number of colleagues and friends read drafts of this study and readily shared their knowledge and wisdom with me. My warmest appreciation goes to Professors David Berger, Robert I. Burns, Gavin I. Langmuir, Norman Roth, and Joseph Shatzmiller. They are of course in no sense responsible for the shortcomings of this final product. The staff of the University of California Press has once more been most concerned and helpful. My special thanks to Stanley Holwitz, Shirley Warren, and Sheila Berg. Finally, my deepest debt is owed, as always, to my wife and children, who have for so many years staunchly supported this and similar projects.

## **Introduction**

For the past ten years, I have been engaged in the study of the crusading assaults of 1096 on major northern European Jewish communities and the remarkable Jewish responses these attacks triggered, and in the analysis of the polemic interchanges between Christians and Jews in twelfth- and thirteenth-century western Christendom. As my work on the events of 1096 drew to a close, I increasingly began to see a connection between the two projects. One of my conclusions with regard to the anti-Jewish violence associated with the First Crusade was that it represented the first stage in the development of a dangerous exclusionist tendency in maturing western Christendom. To be sure, the radical stance of the popular German crusading bands, that is, the effort to efface Jewishness either by forcible conversion of the Jews or by liquidating those who refused, was repudiated by Church leadership and was vigorously combated during the subsequent crusades. Nonetheless, the tendency these radical crusaders represented—the desire to provide a more homogeneous Christian environment by removing the Jews—manifested itself in more legitimate fashion in an increasingly serious drive to convert the Jews of western Christendom by the force of reasonable argumentation. In this sense, then, this study is directly linked to my investigation of the anti-Jewish violence associated with the First Crusade.

The title of this volume, *Daggers of Faith: Thirteenth-Century Christian Missionizing and Jewish Response*, is an adaptation of the title of Friar Raymond Martin's landmark work, the *Pugio Fidei* (*The Dagger of Faith*), which is the most innovative and comprehensive medieval Christian manual for conversionist efforts among the Jews. I have transformed Friar Raymond's singular dagger into the plural to reflect the focus of this study on both the Christian thrust and the Jewish parry. As was the case for my investigation of the First Crusade, my intention here is to analyze more than the majority assault on the

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Jewish minority; I am equally concerned with the creative response of the Jewish minority to the pressures exerted on them.

Once I committed myself to the study of thirteenth-century Christian missionizing and the Jewish response, it became clear that there were additional important dimensions to the project. This missionizing effort affords considerable insight into the spiritual climate of the middle decades of the thirteenth century and into the increasingly powerful Church organization as well. At this juncture, the drive toward a more homogeneous Christian society emerged in broad segments of European society. The techniques for achievement of this homogeneity varied, as is indicated convincingly in Benjamin Z. Kedar's excellent study of the alternative tactics of crusade and mission.<sup>[1]</sup> Equally important at precisely this point, the Roman Catholic Church had developed the means, both organizational and intellectual, to spearhead an ambitious program for the conversion of European Jewry. The study of thirteenth-century missionizing among the Jews thus provides yet another perspective on the climate of mid-thirteenth-century western Christendom, a period during which vigorous self-confidence combined with uncertainty and insecurity moved the leadership of western Christendom to press for enhanced homogeneity within and for expansion of the borders of Christian domination without. The findings of this study certainly

break no new ground in the understanding of Christian Europe during the middle decades of the thirteenth century; however, they do provide, from an unusual vantage point, corroboration for the general consensus on the salient characteristics of this important period.

The two initial thrusts of this study—analysis of the accelerating pressures mounted against thirteenth-century European Jewry and reflections on the general environment of western Christendom at that critical juncture—result in some overlap with Jeremy Cohen's important work, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism*. Our subtitles indicate a substantial difference in focus, however. Cohen essays an analysis of the emergence of what he sees as a new and deleterious anti-Jewish ideology during the middle decades of the thirteenth century. His own formulation is as follows:

The prime concern of this book is with the hitherto unappreciated substance of the friars' attack upon the Jews, the basic ideas and theological considerations that underlay their anti-Jewish activities and polemics. I shall argue that the Dominicans and Franciscans developed, refined, and

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sought to implement a new Christian ideology with regard to the Jews, one that allotted the Jews no legitimate right to exist in European society.[2]

My study, by contrast, is devoted to an investigation of the mid-thirteenth-century missionizing effort as such. It attempts to understand the new thrusts of this proselytizing campaign and the creative responses that were engendered from the Jewish side. In the final chapter, in a discussion of the implications of this innovative effort, I do subject Cohen's utilization of the materials studied to careful scrutiny, finding the conclusions he draws from the new Christian proselytizing unwarranted.

Yet another field that this analysis illuminates is the history of Christian missionizing among the Jews. This important topic is generally extremely difficult to study: the limited source materials fail to provide a sufficiently solid base for reliable conclusions. Given the data available for discussion of mid-thirteenth-century Christian missionizing among the Jews, it is possible to arrive at conclusions that are interesting in and of themselves and that, at the same time, shed considerable light on prior and subsequent Christian efforts to convert the Jews. What emerges most strikingly is that this mid-thirteenth-century effort breaks new ground in the seriousness of the commitment to win over Jews to the Christian faith. Indeed, I have been led to conclude that it constitutes the first truly serious Christian proselytizing campaign among the Jews. The intensity of this endeavor, defined in terms of allocation of significant resources, establishment of regularized methods of confronting the Jews with Christian claims, and development of argumentation that is sensitive to the Jews and their world view, sets a standard by which prior and subsequent Christian missionizing campaigns might be judged. The mid-thirteenth-century campaign constitutes a significant

element in the history of Christian missionizing among the Jews and, beyond that, establishes important guidelines for study of the entire field of Christian proselytizing endeavors among them.

Finally, this investigation treats important aspects of Jewish life during this period. It reveals a Jewish community subjected to increasingly damaging pressures. It is fairly obvious that the missionizing campaign that is the subject of this study did not constitute the most oppressive of the anti-Jewish initiatives undertaken at this time. Clearer awareness of this thrust, however, enables us to perceive more

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fully how difficult the circumstances of Jewish life were and how strong the pressures were which would eventually sap the vigor of once-flourishing European Jewry. Further, it is apparent that the Jewish community of western Christendom—under severe pressure, to be sure—had not yet lost its vitality and resilience. As we examine the various Christian thrusts and Jewish parries, we will gain a sense of Jews still very vigorous in their thinking, capable of analyzing the innovative arguments of their foes, identifying weaknesses in these new claims, and mounting wide-ranging counterarguments. Perhaps equally significant, we will find these Jews able to resist the subtler psychological thrusts of the new Christian argumentation and unwilling to succumb to the underlying notion of the hopelessness of the Jewish position. This understanding of still-powerful mid-thirteenth-century Jewry will afford a useful basis for contrast with developments in late-fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Jewish life, when this vigor and resilience gave way to a sense of substantial hopelessness and despair.

It is appropriate to define the temporal and geographic boundaries of this study. The chronological limits of my investigation are from 1240 to 1280. I begin with the edict of King James I of Aragon ordering forced Jewish attendance at conversionist sermons and conclude shortly after the completion of Friar Raymond's magisterial handbook, the *Pugio Fidei*. Of course, historical process does not operate within such clearly defined boundaries. I therefore devote considerable attention to the backdrop against which the new missionizing must be understood. Nonetheless, the middle four decades of the thirteenth century do constitute a remarkably coherent period for this campaign. Earlier, we can discern little in the way of precursors; by 1280, a fully developed set of techniques and arguments was firmly in place.

This study was initiated with no assumptions regarding geographic boundaries. Indeed, it is obvious that the key figures in the proselytizing campaign saw it as pan-European. Friar Paul Christian, in all likelihood the originator of the effort, began his preaching in southern France, then proceeded into Catalonia for his most important confrontations with the Jews, and eventually won the support of King Louis IX of France for conversionist sermons in Paris and elsewhere in northern France. As the study progressed, it became clear that the geographic center of this unprecedented campaign and thus of the study

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as well was the Iberian Peninsula, more specifically, the expanding realms of Aragon. This is not surprising. As an increasingly vigorous western Christendom struck out at its historic enemy, the world of Islam, it was Spain, situated at one of the key points of contact between the two civilizations, that was the scene of some of the most intense military engagements as well as some of the most innovative spiritual battles. The combination of Spanish sensitivity to the external Muslim enemy and Spanish awareness of a large internal community of Muslim and Jewish dissidents put the Spanish Church into the forefront of thirteenth-century efforts to win over—in a variety of ways—the nonbelievers. In the introduction to his translation of Raymond Lull's Book of the Gentile and the Three Wise Men, Anthony Bonner pinpoints the uniqueness of the realms of Aragon with respect to missionizing ardor.

In the space of twenty-two years (1226–48), Muslim possessions were reduced from a third of the entire Iberian peninsula to the area covered by the petty kingdom of Granada. This sudden absorption of new lands had a different effect on the crown of Aragon than on Castile. In the latter, a nation of 3 million conquered some 300,000 people in Andalusia, with the resultant increase of only 10 percent in population; whereas Aragon and Catalonia, with a combined population of half a million, found that in Valencia alone they had taken on 150,000 people, representing an increase of 30 percent.[3]

Bonner suggests that this background is essential for understanding Lull's early and unremitting commitment to the missionizing enterprise; for our purposes, it also indicates why so much of the activity depicted in this study centers in the realms of Aragon. The focus on Aragon is not exclusive, and it has not resulted from an *a priori* assumption on my part. As the investigation proceeded, it became increasingly apparent that Spain—more specifically, the realms of Aragon—was in fact the scene of much of the innovation that characterizes the new missionizing of the middle decades of the thirteenth century.

A brief comment on the vexing problem of presentation of personal names and placenames. For a variety of reasons, I have decided wherever possible to use accepted English forms of both, for example, Raymond rather than Ramon and Moses rather than Moshe. Where such recognized English forms are not available, I have used the ap-

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propriate contemporary spellings, utilizing accepted forms of transliteration from Hebrew.

An emphasis on the innovativeness of the new missionizing campaign of the mid-thirteenth century means that we must inevitably begin with some sense of what came before. We therefore turn our attention first to the earlier patterns of Christian missionizing among the Jews.

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## The Pre-Thirteenth-Century Legacy

### An Overview of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Missionizing among the Jews

Like its sister monotheisms, Christianity, committed to the notion of one true God and one true covenant between that God and a particular human community, felt a religious and moral imperative to spread its truth among all humanity. For Christians, failure to make such an attempt represented a major dereliction of duty. It would seem that the Jews were particularly well suited for Christian missionizing, since they shared so much common sacred literature and so many fundamental views.

While there is some truth in this simplistic formulation, it does not begin to address the complex phenomenon of Christian missionizing among the Jews. There were far more powerful stimuli for, and some significant constraints on, such proselytizing. The complexities can only be understood against the backdrop of the evolution of Christianity from sectarian status within Palestinian Jewry, to religious and social independence, to a position of dominance in western civilization. The only way to highlight these complexities is by pointing (as briefly as possible) to the salient stages in this evolution.[1]

The difficulties of reconstructing the earliest period in the history of Christianity are well known. The sources for these all-important years stem from later decades and from radically altered circumstances, making recovery of this formative epoch almost impossible. Nonetheless, for our purposes, it is clear and beyond dispute that the social context of earliest Christianity was Palestinian Jewry. In a Jewish community beset with overwhelming political pressures, there was vital and intense religious creativity, which resulted in extensive fragmentation, as differing groups within the community found con-

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flicting political and religious solutions to the problems of those trying times.[2] Earliest Christian missionizing was carried out almost exclusively among Jews. To be sure, the term missionizing here means merely the effort to attract members of the Jewish community to a particular understanding of the Jewish covenant, in the same way that one could speak of Pharisaic, Sadducean, or Essenean missionizing within first-century Palestinian Jewry.

The Jewish context of this effort to win new adherents is shown dramatically by the story of the centurion Cornelius in Acts. All the details of the narrative bespeak an ingrained reluctance by Jesus' earliest followers to take their message outside the Jewish fold. It is only a set of divine signs to Peter that makes him receptive to the invitation of the gentile Cornelius.[3] This ongoing Jewish context is demonstrated in an equally forceful manner by the lines of argumentation that are fundamental to the authors of the Gospels. Although these works derive from a later period, a time in which the message of Christianity was directed far beyond the Jewish community, the core argument for the truth of the Christian vision

remained fulfillment by Jesus of prophetically uttered predictions concerning the advent of the Messiah. The persistence of such an argument reflects again the Jewish context of earliest Christianity and constitutes a powerful legacy for subsequent efforts to show Jews that the literature held sacred by both Jews and Christians adumbrates fully the truth of the latter group's religious vision.

The original message of Jesus and his immediate followers (whatever it might have been) exhibited appeal beyond this initial circle of Palestinian Jews, attracting Greek-speaking diaspora Jews and, eventually, gentiles as well. Paul is associated with this movement outward and with the inevitable shift in ideas that had to accompany such a shift in social context. Since the ideas of the earlier stage cannot be brought into focus clearly, it is impossible to delineate with precision the Pauline innovations. What concerns us here is Paul's relationship to the Jews, an exceedingly complex subject and the occasion of much recent scholarly investigation and dispute.<sup>[4]</sup> Central to this study are the implications of the Pauline stance for proselytizing among the Jews. While there is evidence in the Pauline Epistles of a desire for bringing the truth of Christianity to his former fellow-Jews, Paul goes to great lengths to emphasize his special role as Apostle to the Gentiles. He seems to negate the intrinsic efficacy of the law with regard to achieving salvation, seeing faith in the risen Jesus as having superseded the old dispensation. Paul's mission was to bring this new and

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universal message to the gentile world. What then of the Jews? The picture is not altogether clear. There is a sense of some residual belief in the efficacy of fulfillment of the law, but there is a stronger sense that someday Jews will join the gentiles in accepting the higher truth of faith in Christ.

I now ask, did their failure mean complete downfall? Far from it! Because they offended, salvation has come to the gentiles, to stir Israel to emulation. But if their offence means the enrichment of the world, and if their falling-off means the enrichment of the gentiles, how much more their coming to full strength!<sup>[5]</sup>

Interspersed with highly negative statements about the Jews and their law—probably aimed at combating the proponents of Jewish law within the Christian camp—is an underlying belief in the eventual uniting of Jew and gentile in acceptance of the highest truth. The potential implications of this complex stance were many and diverse.

While a Jewish-Christian community survived for many centuries, the future of Christianity lay outside of Palestine and beyond the confines of the Jewish community. It was among the gentile population of the Roman Empire that the independent Christian faith was to spread widely.<sup>[6]</sup> During the first four centuries of this expansion, the young Christian community was beleaguered and persecuted. It is impossible to be sure of its stance toward missionizing among the Jews. It seems likely that the main thrust of proselytizing

efforts was aimed at the Greco-Roman population of the empire. Yet the issue of the Jews could hardly have been a matter of indifference, even during this trying period. First, the Jews formed a considerable percentage of the population of the Roman Empire; indeed, they were a segment of the general populace that should have been susceptible to Christian claims. Since so much of Gospel argumentation involved texts revered by Jews and Christians alike, what group would, on the face of it, be more likely to understand and accept the truth of Christianity? Second, the Jews inevitably became an issue for believing Christians, perhaps particularly for those recently attracted to the fold. Again, given the extent to which Jewish texts and values permeated the Christian Scriptures, it is not surprising that on occasion converts to Christianity should have raised questions about Judaism, about its truth and its shortcomings.

It has long been recognized that at least some of the literature ostensibly directed at Jews was in fact intended to obviate the dangers of judaizing among Christians, especially new ones.<sup>[7]</sup> Similarly, there

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was also occasionally a Jewish issue associated with preaching to the pagan world. Pagans aware of the close link between Judaism and Christianity often employed Jewish-related argumentation in their anti-Christian treatises, and as a result, Christian spokesmen often had to make convincing anti-Jewish statements as part of their appeal to pagan audiences.<sup>[8]</sup> The source materials for this crucial period are not terribly rich, and the reality was ever-changing and diverse. Consequently, we can reach no comfortable conclusion about the extent, during these centuries, of the missionizing effort among the Jews. In any case, it hardly seems to have been a predominant concern of an embattled but rapidly expanding Christian community.

With the early-fourth-century reversal of the political fortunes of Christianity and its sudden accession to power in the Roman Empire, the stage would seem to have been set for many radical changes, including, perhaps, enhanced proselytizing among the Jews. In truth, however, the road to Christian supremacy was slow and exacting. The brief reign of Julian highlighted the tenuous hold of Christianity within the empire and the necessity for struggle on many fronts, with the Jewish community once again a significant but not overwhelming priority. Indisputably new was the Christian need to adumbrate, from a position of strength, a policy vis-à-vis the one other monotheistic community and the bearer of a heritage now claimed by the dominant daughter religion. What emerged slowly on the political level was the notion of Judaism as a legitimate religious faith, misguided in its theology but sufficiently conversant with the truth to warrant toleration in a Christian commonwealth.<sup>[9]</sup>

This political theory came to be increasingly buttressed with theological underpinnings, suggesting that toleration of the Jews involved far more than a mere modus vivendi: the divine plan for the universe allocated a significant place for the once-proud, now-humbled Jewish people. The basic notion, articulated most successfully and most lastingly by Saint Augustine, argued that the Jews were vouchsafed a specific role in the divine plan for the development of human society. This role involved serving the purposes of

Christian missioning among the pagans of the world. The Jews provided a useful set of arguments to the pagan population, and they did this in a number of ways.[10] Two modes predominate. The first involves Jewish testimony to the divine origins of the Scriptures. As Christians sought to win over their pagan neighbors, disinterested testimony to the truth of biblical prophecy was of great value. Christians could point to Jewish acceptance of the

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entire corpus of the Hebrew Bible; on this testimony, they could then construct their Christological exegesis. The Jews functioned in another and more deleterious fashion. Their allegedly abject fate subsequent to rejection of the special claims of Jesus and to imputed responsibility for his death was viewed by Christians as evidence for the truth of Christianity and the errors of Judaism. According to this view, the Jews were immediately visited with divine punishment for their repudiation of Jesus, punishment that took the form of loss of their Temple, their city of Jerusalem, and their homeland; this purported punishment was traditionally seen as clear proof of the indisputable truth of those claims which the Jews had misguidedly spurned. All of this made the Jews useful, and indeed the sense emerged that they were an indispensable part of preredemptive society. Moreover, the Jews were to serve an additional function at the onset of redemption. At that crucial juncture, they would convert en masse. Such conversion would be one of the undeniable signs of the onset of the new era.

Given this new political and theological framework, what were the implications for missionizing among the Jews? Once again, no clearcut answer emerges. On the one hand, there had to be ongoing interest in such missionizing. The general desire to spread the truth of Christianity and the pervasive sense that, of all people, the Jews should be most responsive to Christian truth made inevitable continued hopes for winning Jews to the fold. On the other hand, the recurrent experience of Jewish intransigence was now buttressed by a political and theological system that exempted the Jews from missionizing efforts. Use of force in bringing Jews to see the truth of Christianity was abjured; similarly, efforts at massive conversion were at least depressed by the notion that wholesale conversion was to be a sign of the onset of the age of redemption. At best, there remained an ongoing sense of the religious responsibility for bringing individual Jews to a recognition of Christian verities and hence to salvation.

As the power of Christianity slowly developed throughout the vast Roman Empire, disintegration of the western half of the empire introduced new realities into the ever-changing relationship between Christian majority and Jewish minority. The history of these areas, the fate of their Jewish population, broad missionizing efforts in these areas, and the missionizing directed specifically at the Jews—all these elements are difficult to trace. In general, the southern (i.e., Mediterranean) sectors of this western Christendom hosted older and larger Jewries, while the northern areas, more recently attached to the orbit

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of Christendom, attracted only sparse new Jewish settlements. The disruption of the Germanic invasions was augmented by the loss of portions of the older and more settled Mediterranean lands to the Muslims, in particular, the rich and important Iberian Peninsula. Through all these upheavals, missionizing among the Jews could hardly have been a significant priority for the political or ecclesiastical leadership of a society in stress.

Only with the reawakening of these western sectors of Christendom, particularly in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, does some measure of concern with missionizing among the Jews reappear. It is during this period that Christendom was aroused to push back the Muslim intrusion into the lands of southern Europe, and it is at this time that a vigorous and creative new northern European Christian society began to assert itself. In these areas, there existed disparate Jewish communities—a larger and more firmly rooted Jewry in the south, particularly that of the Iberian Peninsula, which had enjoyed substantial growth and development on many levels under Muslim rule, and a newly emergent but surprisingly vigorous Jewry north of the Loire, a community whose vitality paralleled the general élan of this rapidly developing area.

The newly invigorated Christian society was profoundly committed to its religious identity. This meant the strengthening of Christianity from within and the winning over of non-Christians from without. This effort was ultimately to prove remarkably, if temporarily, successful. Rarely has such a large and creative area been so thoroughly unified under the banner of a common faith. While there were non-Christians in the area and dissident Christians as well, the level of unity was unusually high. What, then, of the Jewish element in this relatively homogeneous society? As has been indicated, the legacy to which eleventh- and twelfth-century western Christendom fell heir was rich and complex, and this complexity is reflected in the varying stances toward conversion of the Jews. On occasion, the intense commitment to a truly and fully Christian society led to abrogation of the safeguards established earlier for Jewish life. In the early eleventh century, for example, concern with the internal danger of incipient Christian heresy in northern Europe seems to have led to a program of forcible conversion that exceeded the limits permitted by Church theory.<sup>[11]</sup> The details of these incidents are sketchy, and too much should not be made of them. The late eleventh century showed yet another instance of this underlying striving toward homogeneity.

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While the assaults on key northern European Jewish communities in 1096 are well known, the phenomenon, it must be emphasized, was a manifestation of excessive zeal on the part of the peripheral crusading forces. Such assaults, preferring to the Jews alternatives of conversion or death, utterly contravened established ecclesiastical theory and practice, were not perpetrated by the better organized and more normative crusading armies, and were quickly and decisively repudiated by Church leadership. The inchoate longings revealed by these extreme behaviors were carefully and effectively restrained by the established authorities of this newly emerging western Christendom.<sup>[12]</sup> For these authorities, the Jews played a more traditional role. They were protected by an important set of safeguards. As individuals, they were potential targets of missionizing but not targets of the highest priority; they were not terribly

significant in the effort to reach out to non-Christians, but they were a prominent factor in combating some internal Christian dissent and, more important, in firming up the belief of Christians in fundamental tenets of Christian faith. Once more, it is widely agreed that the literature ostensibly aimed at convincing Jews of the truth of Christianity was probably committed to other goals, most likely the buttressing of internal Christian conviction. Particularly in the area of western Christendom where the Jews constituted a small (but the only) non-Christian community, such a literature repudiating Jewish belief served to answer two important questions: how could any group fail to acknowledge the truth of Christianity? and how, in particular, could a group that accepted and revered a segment of the Christian Scriptures not recognize Christian verities? This view of the *adversus Judaeos* literature of the eleventh and twelfth centuries does not gainsay the reality of occasional Jewish conversion to Christianity—and indeed conversion in the opposite direction as well. It merely suggests that conversion of the Jews was not a high priority of that creative epoch.[13]

At the close of this rapid sketch of the evolution of earlier Christian missionizing among the Jews, it is useful to draw some general conclusions as to the legacy bequeathed to thirteenth-century Christendom. First, there were powerful incentives for missionizing among the Jews. Chief among these was the sense that the Jews, of all peoples, should be responsive to Christian truth. Second, the positive motivation for proselytizing among the Jews was mitigated by further considerations: recognition of the preredemptive legitimacy of Judaism; theological notions of the utility of Jewish presence; association of massive

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conversion of the Jews with the onset of redemption; and a rather poor rate of success in efforts at conversion of the Jews. Finally, the historical record seems to show little evidence of serious conversionist efforts among the Jews.

#### The Essential Characteristics of Serious Missionizing

Having surveyed a series of major periods in Christian missionizing among the Jews, it is useful to probe more deeply into those elements required for serious conversionist efforts. The first is allocation of substantial ecclesiastical resources to such efforts. In a less developed epoch, this would mean substantial commitment of time by major figures for the purpose of conversion of the Jews; in a more advanced period, this allocation of resources should take the form of specialized personnel, trained specifically for such proselytizing. The second feature of serious proselytizing would be the creation of special techniques for consistently confronting the Jews with the truth of Christianity. Random teaching, discussion, or debate hardly bespeaks a deep-seated commitment; it is the search for regularized methods of reaching the Jews—or any other target, for that matter—that typifies intensity of purpose. The third and last feature of serious missionizing is the elaboration of convincing argumentation. This means, above all else, some awareness of Jewish patterns of thought, on the basis of which argumentation effective among the Jews could be developed. Wholehearted efforts at missionizing among the Jews require a penetrating examination of Jewish thinking so as to identify points of weakness that might be attacked and exploited. Without such awareness of the internal life of the Jews, missionizing argumentation generally misses the

mark, usually because the goal, in fact, is not to convince Jews but to buttress Christian belief. A profound effort to convert Jews must include a careful assessment of the Jews and their views as a preliminary step toward adumbration of arguments that will unerringly reach the Jewish mind and heart.

Using these criteria as the basis for identifying serious missionizing, we can, I believe, reinforce the conclusion that pre-thirteenth-century Christendom shows little evidence of a sustained commitment to proselytizing among the Jews. All through the first twelve centuries of Christian history, there were sporadic efforts at missionizing among the Jews, sometimes within the boundaries permitted by ecclesiastical

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theory and sometimes beyond the boundaries. At no point, however, do we have the sense of sustained and protracted allocation of significant resources, elaboration of effective techniques for reaching the Jews, and creation of persuasive lines of argumentation designed specifically for the Jewish mentality.

There is certainly no evidence, prior to the thirteenth century, of allocation of serious resources to missionizing among the Jews. Some of the major thinkers of Christendom did devote themselves to this goal, but their involvement hardly constitutes a significant element in their creativity. Thus, for example, Saint Augustine did devote two treatises and a lengthy epistle to the issue of the Jews, but within the total output of this prolific figure this material was of negligible significance.[14] More important, there is no evidence whatsoever for special training or for specialized personnel devoted primarily to the goal of proselytizing among the Jews. There is also no evidence for the establishment of regular techniques for bringing the message of Christianity to a Jewish audience. There are occasional reports of friendly conversations and discussions, of sermons that Jews were forced to attend, or of random debates in which Jews were forced to participate. What is missing in all this is regularization. There is no sense of development of techniques that, once established, were consistently employed.

Evaluation of pre-thirteenth-century argumentation is somewhat more difficult. There surely was consideration given to arguments that would be persuasive to Jews. While this, as we have seen, was not the only function of the *adversus Judaeos* literature, such literature had to bear some relation to Jewish thinking. Let us look in a bit more detail at the main lines of Christian conversionist argumentation directed toward the Jews. Such an examination must address itself to the substance of the issues discussed and—more important—to the bases on which the arguments rest.[15]

Effective religious argumentation of necessity involves both a positive and a negative thrust. The spokesman for a given religious faith normally sets out to prove the essential truth of his tradition and the fundamental shortcomings of the faith of his listener or reader. Seen in this fashion, the substance of Christian anti-Jewish argumentation is fairly straightforward and can be identified in terms of a series of

contrasting statements. (1) Christianity represents the fulfillment of the biblical covenant, while Judaism is debased distortion of that covenant. More specifically, Christian spokesmen argued that Jesus was

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the promised Messiah and Redeemer and the church established in the wake of his mission represented the continuation of the Israel that had first fathomed the existence of the one true God and, in return, had been promised great blessing by that God. By contrast, the Jewish people, biologically the heirs of biblical Israel, had forfeited all right to that blessing. (2) Christianity represents a system through which the believer can achieve salvation, while Judaism is misguided in its religious directives: it is at best useless, at worst harmful. (3) The Christian Church has both a distinguished present and—more important—a brilliant future. Judaism is demeaned in its present circumstances and has lost all hope for a meaningful future. The final act in its history can only be its disappearance.

More important than the basic assertions were the foundations on which these claims rested. The overwhelming proportion of this argumentation was rooted in Christological exegesis of the Hebrew Bible. As we noted at the outset, Judaism and Christianity shared a common religious literature and a common sense that it represented the essentials of divinely revealed truth. Given the sense that God had directly transmitted his truth to mankind and that this truth was embodied in the biblical corpus, proper understanding of the Scriptures afforded the simplest and most straightforward avenue to the truth. Thus, for example, the Christian sense that Jesus of Nazareth represented clear and unequivocal fulfillment of scriptural prophecy concerning the Messiah provided, from the Christian perspective, the most telling possible argument to be used with Jews. Likewise, claims that the Church represented the continuation of biblical Israel and that the directives of the Church could be clearly discerned in the literature of divine revelation constituted the most convincing claims that could be advanced to anyone, in some senses, particularly to the Jews. Collections of biblical testimonia and argumentation drawn from biblical exegesis abound. The point of all these citations and explications is that the Scriptures, that is, divinely revealed truth, clearly exhibit the irrefutable truth of fundamental Christian teachings.

Evaluating the thinking behind these truth claims is difficult, indeed, in most instances, impossible. Were the authors of such tracts themselves convinced of the efficacy of these arguments? Since the same claims were useful for internal Christian purposes and could even be utilized in attracting non-Christians other than Jews, it is generally impossible to assess the seriousness of the intent to missionize among the Jews. Nevertheless, it seems clear that, while many Chris-

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tian authors may have been genuinely convinced of the potential impact of such argumentation among the Jews, there was little or no effort to weigh such impact realistically. Given the rich Christian exegetical tradition, it must have been fairly obvious that the Jews also had an exegetical tradition of their own, which might run counter to Christian claims. Before the thirteenth century, we note little Christian

awareness of this Jewish exegetical tradition and even less utilization of it for missionizing purposes. Again, this leads us to question the intensity of the sporadic efforts to convert the Jews.

While biblically based argumentation certainly predominated in pre-thirteenth-century conversionist efforts among the Jews, a number of alternative approaches are in evidence. One utilized the contemporary criteria of rationality to argue for the truth of Christianity (and hence the error of Judaism). Early in its development, Christianity had absorbed much of the Greco-Roman commitment to philosophic inquiry. There developed a sense that the revealed truth of Christian faith and philosophic truth could only be one and the same. Given this profound conviction, it was inevitable that philosophic inquiry and conclusions eventually would be turned into weapons to be utilized in the battle for the souls of nonbelievers. While this philosophic impulse waned considerably in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, the powerful revitalization of the eleventh and twelfth centuries brought with it a renewed passion for philosophic inquiry and a renewed conviction of the fundamental rationality of Christianity and the essential irrationality of all other faiths. Thus, during these centuries, a recurrent thrust in Christian argumentation aimed at the Jews was the philosophic truth of Christian doctrine. Once more, the view is that key Christian beliefs are indisputably true, with such truth claims now rooted in philosophic considerations.[16] Such argumentation may have been directed at Jews, but it served an equally useful function in buttressing Christian belief. Moreover, its utility was limited to a rather thin stratum of society—those, both Jewish and Christian, who were intellectually capable of sophisticated reasoning and emotionally ready to be moved by its conclusions.

Yet another approach utilized in pre-thirteenth-century Christian argumentation aimed at the Jews was drawn from empirical observation. The claim was that direct observation of contemporary realities would indicate clearly and convincingly the superiority of Christianity. For example, traditional in all intergroup religious polemics is the claim that the standard of behavior associated with the in-group's re-

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ligious faith is far higher than that associated with the belief system of the out-group. Christian anti-Jewish argumentation, from early on, had harshly criticized aspects of Jewish behavior, particularly those associated with rigorous fidelity to Jewish law, which Christianity, after all, saw as outmoded. As we approach the thirteenth century, an innovative theme emerges—criticism of the new economic specialization in moneylending by northern European Jews. The historical factors that gave rise to this new Jewish specialization lie beyond the province of this study. What is important here is that moneylending, traditionally an unpopular occupation, quickly made its appearance in religious argumentation, serving (overtly or covertly) to buttress the general Christian claim of moral superiority—hence, religious truth-and Jewish moral inferiority.[17] A second important line of Christian argumentation drawn ostensibly from empirical observation involved historical realities, the perceived patterns of Christian and Jewish fate. As Christianity spread and, in particular, when it assumed a position of political dominance in the Roman Empire, it was almost inevitable that a sense of numerical and political supremacy would be translated into a sense of religious truth. To the Christian mind, it was from

this that demographic and social success had eventuated. This old argument had gained much strength by the thirteenth century. In the vigorous and expanding Christendom of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, where the Jews were in some areas a small, old segment of the population and in other areas a relatively tiny, new group, the sense of meaningful correlation between religious truth and social, economic, political, and military might was intense.[18] It hardly bears repeating that these empirically based claims, while they surely may have had an impact on Jewish audiences, were useful in buttressing Christian belief, and again there seems to have been little effort to look within the Jewish community and ascertain the defenses it had long ago erected against such Christian assertions.

In sum, there may have been some development of serious argumentation designed to convince Jews of the truth of Christianity, but the evidence is not impressive. Instead, the tendency seems toward utilization of fairly standardized and traditional arguments, rarely, if ever, assessed realistically for their actual impact on Jewish auditors or readers.

In fact, it is clear that the Jews within the orbit of Christendom early on developed a full set of responses to the various lines of argumentation just delineated. In assessing these responses, it must be re-

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called that, for long periods of time, most of world Jewry was outside Christendom's sphere of influence and therefore was not vitally concerned with the thrusts of Christianity (either explicitly or implicitly). Specifically, this involves the major Jewry of Mesopotamia during late antiquity and the larger Jewries of the early medieval Muslim world. Only those Jewish communities situated in a predominantly Christian environment were absorbed with the task of reacting to Christian argumentation: (1) the shrinking Jewry of the Roman Empire during late antiquity, which has left us no significant Jewish literature;[19] (2) the ongoing Jewry of the Byzantine Empire, which has left us few pre-thirteenth-century materials;[20] and (3) the emergent Jewries of revitalized pre-thirteenth-century western Christendom, some of whose literary productivity has survived. This latter material gives us our fullest sense of Jewish lines of response to Christian argumentation.

In defending themselves from perceived Christian thrusts, both positive and negative, Jews responded in a double fashion. They argued that Judaism was the true faith (i.e., that the Christian negative assessments were wrong) and that Christianity showed serious, indeed fatal, flaws (i.e., that the positive Christian assertions were in error). While it was often impossible to ascertain whether Christian arguments were intended to win over Jews, whether their purpose was to reinforce the beliefs of the Christian community, or whether—on occasion—they might have been created to serve as an element in missionizing among other nonbelieving groups, the Jewish polemic statements—whether defensive or offensive—were clearly meant for internal purposes only, to buttress the faith of Jews. There were, to be sure, occasional instances of Christian conversion to Judaism, despite the overt prohibition of such acts and the dangers involved, but such limited conversionist potential could not give rise to a significant missionizing literature.

To the extent that we encounter a Jewish polemical literature, it is clearly intended for buttressing Jewish faith only.

The centrality of scriptural exegesis in Christian polemical literature is reflected in the parallel emphasis on biblical verses and their meaning in the Jewish literature of response. Indeed, modern scholars have long been aware of anti-Christian argumentation in many of the standard biblical commentaries composed by Jews in eleventh- and twelfth-century western Christendom.[21] In the twelfth century, we encounter a major work composed specifically of, and devoted primarily to, anti-Christian biblical exegesis, *Milhamot[\*]ha-Shem* (The Wars

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of the Lord) by Jacob ben Reuben. In this important work, the author proceeds book by book and verse by verse, adducing Christological interpretations of key biblical verses and then vigorously rebutting these interpretations.[22] The Jews of western Christendom were surely deeply aware of the importance of this argumentation to the Christian camp and had developed, prior to the thirteenth century, an extensive literature of refutation.

The renewed claims for the rationality of Christian faith are similarly reflected, albeit less fulsomely, in Jewish literature of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Jewish authors responded to these renewed Christian claims by reiterating traditional Jewish arguments for the simplicity and rationality of Jewish beliefs and the irrationality of fundamental tenets of Christian dogma, with a heavy emphasis on the doctrines of Incarnation and Trinity. Thus, the first chapter of the twelfth-century *Milhamot[\*]ha-Shem* presents a careful and critical look at key Christian doctrines, while the contemporary *Sefer ha-Berit* (Book of the Covenant) argues simultaneously for the rationality of Jewish doctrine and the essential irrationality of Christian belief.[23]

Jews were also aware of the empirically based argumentation and countered with claims of their own. To pursue the examples cited above, Jews made their own assessment of relative moral and ethical standards. They were fully prepared to argue strenuously for the higher ethical standards of their community, to criticize vigorously the flaws of Christian society, and to assert that this moral differential was an inevitable concomitant of religious truth and error.[24] Jews were similarly prepared to argue the empirically observable differences in social and political strength. While the reality of far greater Christian numbers and power could not be disputed, the meaning of such temporal superiority could. Jews argued that this imbalance in Christian and Jewish material strength was all part of the divine plan, that Christian superiority would eventually evaporate (as had the power of earlier empires), and that an exalted Jewish status would eventuate—if Jewish behavior and belief were such as to warrant the advent of messianic redemption.[25] In some ways, this line of Jewish argumentation threw the issue back into the arena of biblical exegesis, with both sides claiming to fathom properly the cryptic scriptural message of divine

redemption. In this sense, Jews argued that redemption could not be understood on the basis of empirical observation, since sensory perceptions could be misleading. Full understanding of

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the redemptive process could only come about as the result of the proper reading of the biblical message.

The most important point for our purposes is the general lack of concern with and awareness of this elaborate Jewish argumentation in the Christian camp. Only when Christian spokesmen began to look carefully into the Jewish community they intended to address, to acquaint themselves with contemporary Jewish thinking, and to take that thinking into account in structuring their proofs for the superiority of Christianity and the inferiority of Judaism could truly serious missionizing efforts be launched.

In a general way, then, based on our criteria, or elements, of intensive missionizing—allocation of extensive resources, adumbration of techniques for regularly confronting Jews with Christians claims, and elaboration of argumentation based on full awareness of contemporary Jewish thinking—we are justified in concluding that pre-thirteenth-century Christendom shows almost no evidence of serious proselytizing among the Jews. This changes dramatically during the middle decades of the thirteenth century; the details of this new missionizing are the focus of this study. Before proceeding to these decades of change, we should pause briefly to note a few twelfth-century figures who show some signs of the new proselytizing ardor and, more important, some indications of the techniques that will comprise part of the new campaign.

#### Twelfth-Century Harbingers of the New

It is now widely agreed that the late eleventh and twelfth centuries constituted a remarkably creative epoch in the history of western Christendom. The growth and change that marked this period led Charles Homer Haskins to speak of a "twelfth-century renaissance," R. W. Southern to call it a "secret revolution," and the conveners of an extraordinary conference on the period to designate it a "renaissance and renewal." The hallmarks of this dynamic age were accelerating population growth, rapid economic expansion, increasing stabilization of political boundaries and establishments, and exciting new intellectual and spiritual horizons.[26]

It is the new awareness of a larger and more complex macrocosm and microcosm that is of great importance to us. As the result of a variety of factors, western Christendom gained a new sense of a vast

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world surrounding it, full of the potential for good and threatening dangers. It likewise began to grapple with a rich, enlivening, and problematic intellectual legacy from antiquity which was rapidly becoming a source of stimulation and challenge. The complexities of the inner world of men and women, so long closed off, began at this same juncture to assert themselves as well.

In all of this, the relatively small Jewish population of western Christendom played a modest role or, better, a series of modest roles. The Jews served as cultural go-betweens, aiding in the process of rediscovering the legacy of antiquity; by their very presence, they served to raise disturbing questions in a society now aware of a large and threatening outside world. Since the Jews themselves were caught up in the new creativity of this dynamic age, on occasion they overtly challenged the beliefs and practices of the larger society that hosted them.[27]

Not surprisingly, then, a new sense of the Jews began inchoately to manifest itself. This new view, like so much of the internal life of the period, was ambivalent and ambiguous. On the one hand, the Jews were slowly beginning to be perceived as threatening, part of the vast array of outside forces ranged against the Christian world. This view expresses itself in popular terms in the anti-Jewish excesses of the fringe crusading bands of 1096 and in the twelfth-century slanders that accuse the Jews of horrifying anti-Christian actions. It expresses itself more slowly in a more authoritative view that Jewish religious beliefs are harmful to Christendom and should be aggressively combated. On the other hand, in a more positive vein, Jews—along with the rest of the world—are perceived as potential converts to Christianity, a faith seen as increasingly rational and appealing by many of its adherents. To be sure, these tendencies are noted only fitfully during the late eleventh and twelfth centuries; they are, as Southern has said, mere "portents of things to come."

For us, concerned with the history of Christian missionizing among the Jews, there is little change to note prior to the middle decades of the thirteenth century. David Berger argues for attitudes ranging from indifference to outright hostility toward missionizing among the Jews.[28] He notes three twelfth-century exceptions to this general pattern. The first of these, an obscure cleric named Odo, part of the school of Peter Abelard, devoted a disproportionate segment of his *Ysagoge in Theologiam* to argumentation against the Jews. His discussion of the Jews is prefaced by the following: "For, if it is proper

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for us to exhort those who are fashioned in the faith to live better, surely we should recall the Jews from their erroneous disbelieving sect."<sup>[29]</sup> Another figure concerned with missionizing to the Jews was the unusual and influential Joachim da Fiora. While caught up in broad speculations concerning the dawning of a new age—a phenomenon regularly associated in Christian thinking with massive conversion of the Jews—Joachim does, in addition, address more immediate and prosaic issues of argumentation against the Jews.<sup>[30]</sup> The third and most interesting and important figure is Peter the Venerable. He captures best the mood that will come to dominate during the middle decades of the thirteenth century—a sense of

the nullity of Judaism and the debased state of its adherents combined with the hope associated with the prospect of converting these obstinate and unfortunate human beings to a vision of the truth. In Peter's polemic, to be sure, the negative tone tends to outweigh the more positive and charitable. Nonetheless, overall he is the most significant of these three men, for he heralds the new stance that will become the norm by the 1240s.[31]

One further observation is in order. These twelfth-century figures introduce us to the new mid-thirteenth-century tendencies not only in their genuine drive to missionize among the Jews but also in their early sense of the need to develop new proselytizing argumentation by gaining better awareness of the Jewish psyche and its patterns of thought. Odo focuses his attention on the Hebrew language, arguing that, for the purposes of successful missionizing among the Jews, it is necessary to develop skills in Hebrew, for the specific purpose of blunting the Jewish claim that scriptural proofs advanced by Christians miss the mark because of an inability to address the original text. Christians concerned with converting Jews, he argues, must be in a position to overcome this standard Jewish ploy. This can only be achieved by meeting the Jews on their own ground, that is, the sacred texts in their original idiom. Striking here is a sense of the Jews and their traditional lines of opposition to Christian argumentation. In that regard, Odo is indeed a precursor of the mid-thirteenth-century figures we will study in greater detail.

Peter the Venerable takes another approach. Well known for his concern to make the Koran available to Christian readers for missionizing purposes, he is responsible for introducing the Talmud into the missionizing context. To be sure, his method is not terribly creative. He essentially turns the fifth of his five books of anti-Jewish polemic into an effort to convince the Jews of the absurdity of their religious

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belief by confronting them with the intellectual depravity of rabbinic fables.[32] Peter operates within the context of the new spirit of western Christendom—a restless search for new knowledge and a commitment to its creative utilization. In a certain sense, he foreshadows both the thirteenth-century attack on the Talmud and the thirteenth-century utilization of the Talmud for proselytizing purposes. But the specifics of his approach bear little promise. Convincing the Jews to abandon Judaism by holding up to ridicule the literature they know well and venerate seems unlikely to achieve success. Nonetheless, the underlying sense that the Jews must be met and challenged on the battleground of their own tradition, that the Christian missionizing enterprise must take account of traditional patterns of Jewish thinking and turn that thinking to Christian advantage—these perceptions do indeed make Peter a precursor of the new missionizing.

One must beware of reading too much into these fleeting hints of something yet to come. But it seems fair to identify the beginnings of the new missionizing in the altered spirit of late-eleventh- and twelfth-century western Christendom. More specifically, there are glimmers of a more serious interest in missionizing among the Jews and vague hints of new tactics in argumentation. For actualization, these

potential new directions required the altered environment of the mid-thirteenth century, with its more cohesive ecclesiastical organization, its more serious grappling with the issue of non-Christians and their religious views, its fuller commitment to a war of words against the infidel world, and its readiness to commit the necessary intellectual resources to an expensive and protracted proselytizing campaign.

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## **An Overview of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Missionizing among the Jews**

Like its sister monotheisms, Christianity, committed to the notion of one true God and one true covenant between that God and a particular human community, felt a religious and moral imperative to spread its truth among all humanity. For Christians, failure to make such an attempt represented a major dereliction of duty. It would seem that the Jews were particularly well suited for Christian missionizing, since they shared so much common sacred literature and so many fundamental views.

While there is some truth in this simplistic formulation, it does not begin to address the complex phenomenon of Christian missionizing among the Jews. There were far more powerful stimuli for, and some significant constraints on, such proselytizing. The complexities can only be understood against the backdrop of the evolution of Christianity from sectarian status within Palestinian Jewry, to religious and social independence, to a position of dominance in western civilization. The only way to highlight these complexities is by pointing (as briefly as possible) to the salient stages in this evolution.[1]

The difficulties of reconstructing the earliest period in the history of Christianity are well known. The sources for these all-important years stem from later decades and from radically altered circumstances, making recovery of this formative epoch almost impossible. Nonetheless, for our purposes, it is clear and beyond dispute that the social context of earliest Christianity was Palestinian Jewry. In a Jewish community beset with overwhelming political pressures, there was vital and intense religious creativity, which resulted in extensive fragmentation, as differing groups within the community found con-

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flicting political and religious solutions to the problems of those trying times.[2] Earliest Christian missionizing was carried out almost exclusively among Jews. To be sure, the term missionizing here means merely the effort to attract members of the Jewish community to a particular understanding of the Jewish covenant, in the same way that one could speak of Pharisaic, Sadducean, or Essenean missionizing within first-century Palestinian Jewry.

The Jewish context of this effort to win new adherents is shown dramatically by the story of the centurion Cornelius in Acts. All the details of the narrative bespeak an ingrained reluctance by Jesus' earliest followers to take their message outside the Jewish fold. It is only a set of divine signs to Peter that makes him receptive to the invitation of the gentile Cornelius.[3] This ongoing Jewish context is demonstrated in an equally forceful manner by the lines of argumentation that are fundamental to the authors of the Gospels. Although these works derive from a later period, a time in which the message of Christianity was directed far beyond the Jewish community, the core argument for the truth of the Christian vision remained fulfillment by Jesus of prophetically uttered predictions concerning the advent of the Messiah. The persistence of such an argument reflects again the Jewish context of earliest Christianity and constitutes a powerful legacy for subsequent efforts to show Jews that the literature held sacred by both Jews and Christians adumbrates fully the truth of the latter group's religious vision.

The original message of Jesus and his immediate followers (whatever it might have been) exhibited appeal beyond this initial circle of Palestinian Jews, attracting Greek-speaking diaspora Jews and, eventually, gentiles as well. Paul is associated with this movement outward and with the inevitable shift in ideas that had to accompany such a shift in social context. Since the ideas of the earlier stage cannot be brought into focus clearly, it is impossible to delineate with precision the Pauline innovations. What concerns us here is Paul's relationship to the Jews, an exceedingly complex subject and the occasion of much recent scholarly investigation and dispute.[4] Central to this study are the implications of the Pauline stance for proselytizing among the Jews. While there is evidence in the Pauline Epistles of a desire for bringing the truth of Christianity to his former fellow-Jews, Paul goes to great lengths to emphasize his special role as Apostle to the Gentiles. He seems to negate the intrinsic efficacy of the law with regard to achieving salvation, seeing faith in the risen Jesus as having superseded the old dispensation. Paul's mission was to bring this new and

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universal message to the gentile world. What then of the Jews? The picture is not altogether clear. There is a sense of some residual belief in the efficacy of fulfillment of the law, but there is a stronger sense that someday Jews will join the gentiles in accepting the higher truth of faith in Christ.

I now ask, did their failure mean complete downfall? Far from it! Because they offended, salvation has come to the gentiles, to stir Israel to emulation. But if their offence means the enrichment of the world, and if their falling-off means the enrichment of the gentiles, how much more their coming to full strength![5]

Interspersed with highly negative statements about the Jews and their law—probably aimed at combating the proponents of Jewish law within the Christian camp—is an underlying belief in the eventual uniting of Jew and gentile in acceptance of the highest truth. The potential implications of this complex stance were many and diverse.

While a Jewish-Christian community survived for many centuries, the future of Christianity lay outside of Palestine and beyond the confines of the Jewish community. It was among the gentile population of the Roman Empire that the independent Christian faith was to spread widely.[6] During the first four centuries of this expansion, the young Christian community was beleaguered and persecuted. It is impossible to be sure of its stance toward missionizing among the Jews. It seems likely that the main thrust of proselytizing efforts was aimed at the Greco-Roman population of the empire. Yet the issue of the Jews could hardly have been a matter of indifference, even during this trying period. First, the Jews formed a considerable percentage of the population of the Roman Empire; indeed, they were a segment of the general populace that should have been susceptible to Christian claims. Since so much of Gospel argumentation involved texts revered by Jews and Christians alike, what group would, on the face of it, be more likely to understand and accept the truth of Christianity? Second, the Jews inevitably became an issue for believing Christians, perhaps particularly for those recently attracted to the fold. Again, given the extent to which Jewish texts and values permeated the Christian Scriptures, it is not surprising that on occasion converts to Christianity should have raised questions about Judaism, about its truth and its shortcomings.

It has long been recognized that at least some of the literature ostensibly directed at Jews was in fact intended to obviate the dangers of judaizing among Christians, especially new ones.[7] Similarly, there

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was also occasionally a Jewish issue associated with preaching to the pagan world. Pagans aware of the close link between Judaism and Christianity often employed Jewish-related argumentation in their anti-Christian treatises, and as a result, Christian spokesmen often had to make convincing anti-Jewish statements as part of their appeal to pagan audiences.[8] The source materials for this crucial period are not terribly rich, and the reality was ever-changing and diverse. Consequently, we can reach no comfortable conclusion about the extent, during these centuries, of the missionizing effort among the Jews. In any case, it hardly seems to have been a predominant concern of an embattled but rapidly expanding Christian community.

With the early-fourth-century reversal of the political fortunes of Christianity and its sudden accession to power in the Roman Empire, the stage would seem to have been set for many ,adical changes, including, perhaps, enhanced proselytizing among the Jews. In truth, however, the road to Christian supremacy was slow and exacting. The brief reign of Julian highlighted the tenuous hold of Christianity within the empire and the necessity for struggle on many fronts, with the Jewish community once again a significant but not overwhelming priority. Indisputably new was the Christian need to adumbrate, from a position of strength, a policy vis-à-vis the one other monotheistic community and the bearer of a heritage now claimed by the dominant daughter religion. What emerged slowly on the political level was the notion of Judaism as a legitimate religious faith, misguided in its theology but sufficiently conversant with the truth to warrant toleration in a Christian commonwealth.[9]

This political theory came to be increasingly buttressed with theological underpinnings, suggesting that toleration of the Jews involved far more than a mere modus vivendi: the divine plan for the universe allocated a significant place for the once-proud, now-humbled Jewish people. The basic notion, articulated most successfully and most lastingly by Saint Augustine, argued that the Jews were vouchsafed a specific role in the divine plan for the development of human society. This role involved serving the purposes of Christian missioning among the pagans of the world. The Jews provided a useful set of arguments to the pagan population, and they did this in a number of ways.[10] Two modes predominate. The first involves Jewish testimony to the divine origins of the Scriptures. As Christians sought to win over their pagan neighbors, disinterested testimony to the truth of biblical prophecy was of great value. Christians could point to Jewish acceptance of the

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entire corpus of the Hebrew Bible; on this testimony, they could then construct their Christological exegesis. The Jews functioned in another and more deleterious fashion. Their allegedly abject fate subsequent to rejection of the special claims of Jesus and to imputed responsibility for his death was viewed by Christians as evidence for the truth of Christianity and the errors of Judaism. According to this view, the Jews were immediately visited with divine punishment for their repudiation of Jesus, punishment that took the form of loss of their Temple, their city of Jerusalem, and their homeland; this purported punishment was traditionally seen as clear proof of the indisputable truth of those claims which the Jews had misguidedly spurned. All of this made the Jews useful, and indeed the sense emerged that they were an indispensable part of preredemptive society. Moreover, the Jews were to serve an additional function at the onset of redemption. At that crucial juncture, they would convert en masse. Such conversion would be one of the undeniable signs of the onset of the new era.

Given this new political and theological framework, what were the implications for missionizing among the Jews? Once again, no clearcut answer emerges. On the one hand, there had to be ongoing interest in such missionizing. The general desire to spread the truth of Christianity and the pervasive sense that, of all people, the Jews should be most responsive to Christian truth made inevitable continued hopes for winning Jews to the fold. On the other hand, the recurrent experience of Jewish intransigence was now buttressed by a political and theological system that exempted the Jews from missionizing efforts. Use of force in bringing Jews to see the truth of Christianity was abjured; similarly, efforts at massive conversion were at least depressed by the notion that wholesale conversion was to be a sign of the onset of the age of redemption. At best, there remained an ongoing sense of the religious responsibility for bringing individual Jews to a recognition of Christian verities and hence to salvation.

As the power of Christianity slowly developed throughout the vast Roman Empire, disintegration of the western half of the empire introduced new realities into the ever-changing relationship between Christian majority and Jewish minority. The history of these areas, the fate of their Jewish population, broad missionizing efforts in these areas, and the missionizing directed specifically at the Jews—all these

elements are difficult to trace. In general, the southern (i.e., Mediterranean) sectors of this western Christendom hosted older and larger Jewries, while the northern areas, more recently attached to the orbit

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of Christendom, attracted only sparse new Jewish settlements. The disruption of the Germanic invasions was augmented by the loss of portions of the older and more settled Mediterranean lands to the Muslims, in particular, the rich and important Iberian Peninsula. Through all these upheavals, missionizing among the Jews could hardly have been a significant priority for the political or ecclesiastical leadership of a society in stress.

Only with the reawakening of these western sectors of Christendom, particularly in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, does some measure of concern with missionizing among the Jews reappear. It is during this period that Christendom was aroused to push back the Muslim intrusion into the lands of southern Europe, and it is at this time that a vigorous and creative new northern European Christian society began to assert itself. In these areas, there existed disparate Jewish communities—a larger and more firmly rooted Jewry in the south, particularly that of the Iberian Peninsula, which had enjoyed substantial growth and development on many levels under Muslim rule, and a newly emergent but surprisingly vigorous Jewry north of the Loire, a community whose vitality paralleled the general élan of this rapidly developing area.

The newly invigorated Christian society was profoundly committed to its religious identity. This meant the strengthening of Christianity from within and the winning over of non-Christians from without. This effort was ultimately to prove remarkably, if temporarily, successful. Rarely has such a large and creative area been so thoroughly unified under the banner of a common faith. While there were non-Christians in the area and dissident Christians as well, the level of unity was unusually high. What, then, of the Jewish element in this relatively homogeneous society? As has been indicated, the legacy to which eleventh- and twelfth-century western Christendom fell heir was rich and complex, and this complexity is reflected in the varying stances toward conversion of the Jews. On occasion, the intense commitment to a truly and fully Christian society led to abrogation of the safeguards established earlier for Jewish life. In the early eleventh century, for example, concern with the internal danger of incipient Christian heresy in northern Europe seems to have led to a program of forcible conversion that exceeded the limits permitted by Church theory.[11] The details of these incidents are sketchy, and too much should not be made of them. The late eleventh century showed yet another instance of this underlying striving toward homogeneity.

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While the assaults on key northern European Jewish communities in 1096 are well known, the phenomenon, it must be emphasized, was a manifestation of excessive zeal on the part of the peripheral crusading forces. Such assaults, preferring to the Jews alternatives of conversion or death, utterly

contravened established ecclesiastical theory and practice, were not perpetrated by the better organized and more normative crusading armies, and were quickly and decisively repudiated by Church leadership. The inchoate longings revealed by these extreme behaviors were carefully and effectively restrained by the established authorities of this newly emerging western Christendom.[12] For these authorities, the Jews played a more traditional role. They were protected by an important set of safeguards. As individuals, they were potential targets of missionizing but not targets of the highest priority; they were not terribly significant in the effort to reach out to non-Christians, but they were a prominent factor in combating some internal Christian dissent and, more important, in firming up the belief of Christians in fundamental tenets of Christian faith. Once more, it is widely agreed that the literature ostensibly aimed at convincing Jews of the truth of Christianity was probably committed to other goals, most likely the buttressing of internal Christian conviction. Particularly in the area of western Christendom where the Jews constituted a small (but the only) non-Christian community, such a literature repudiating Jewish belief served to answer two important questions: how could any group fail to acknowledge the truth of Christianity? and how, in particular, could a group that accepted and revered a segment of the Christian Scriptures not recognize Christian verities? This view of the adversus Judaeos literature of the eleventh and twelfth centuries does not gainsay the reality of occasional Jewish conversion to Christianity—and indeed conversion in the opposite direction as well. It merely suggests that conversion of the Jews was not a high priority of that creative epoch.[13]

At the close of this rapid sketch of the evolution of earlier Christian missionizing among the Jews, it is useful to draw some general conclusions as to the legacy bequeathed to thirteenth-century Christendom. First, there were powerful incentives for missionizing among the Jews. Chief among these was the sense that the Jews, of all peoples, should be responsive to Christian truth. Second, the positive motivation for proselytizing among the Jews was mitigated by further considerations: recognition of the preredemptive legitimacy of Judaism; theological notions of the utility of Jewish presence; association of massive

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conversion of the Jews with the onset of redemption; and a rather poor rate of success in efforts at conversion of the Jews. Finally, the historical record seems to show little evidence of serious conversionist efforts among the Jews.

## The Essential Characteristics of Serious Missionizing

Having surveyed a series of major periods in Christian missionizing among the Jews, it is useful to probe more deeply into those elements required for serious conversionist efforts. The first is allocation of substantial ecclesiastical resources to such efforts. In a less developed epoch, this would mean substantial commitment of time by major figures for the purpose of conversion of the Jews; in a more advanced period, this allocation of resources should take the form of specialized personnel, trained specifically for such proselytizing. The second feature of serious proselytizing would be the creation of special techniques for consistently confronting the Jews with the truth of Christianity. Random teaching, discussion, or debate hardly bespeaks a deep-seated commitment; it is the search for regularized methods of reaching

the Jews—or any other target, for that matter—that typifies intensity of purpose. The third and last feature of serious missionizing is the elaboration of convincing argumentation. This means, above all else, some awareness of Jewish patterns of thought, on the basis of which argumentation effective among the Jews could be developed. Wholehearted efforts at missionizing among the Jews require a penetrating examination of Jewish thinking so as to identify points of weakness that might be attacked and exploited. Without such awareness of the internal life of the Jews, missionizing argumentation generally misses the mark, usually because the goal, in fact, is not to convince Jews but to buttress Christian belief. A profound effort to convert Jews must include a careful assessment of the Jews and their views as a preliminary step toward adumbration of arguments that will unerringly reach the Jewish mind and heart.

Using these criteria as the basis for identifying serious missionizing, we can, I believe, reinforce the conclusion that pre-thirteenth-century Christendom shows little evidence of a sustained commitment to proselytizing among the Jews. All through the first twelve centuries of Christian history, there were sporadic efforts at missionizing among the Jews, sometimes within the boundaries permitted by ecclesiastical

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theory and sometimes beyond the boundaries. At no point, however, do we have the sense of sustained and protracted allocation of significant resources, elaboration of effective techniques for reaching the Jews, and creation of persuasive lines of argumentation designed specifically for the Jewish mentality.

There is certainly no evidence, prior to the thirteenth century, of allocation of serious resources to missionizing among the Jews. Some of the major thinkers of Christendom did devote themselves to this goal, but their involvement hardly constitutes a significant element in their creativity. Thus, for example, Saint Augustine did devote two treatises and a lengthy epistle to the issue of the Jews, but within the total output of this prolific figure this material was of negligible significance.[14] More important, there is no evidence whatsoever for special training or for specialized personnel devoted primarily to the goal of proselytizing among the Jews. There is also no evidence for the establishment of regular techniques for bringing the message of Christianity to a Jewish audience. There are occasional reports of friendly conversations and discussions, of sermons that Jews were forced to attend, or of random debates in which Jews were forced to participate. What is missing in all this is regularization. There is no sense of development of techniques that, once established, were consistently employed.

Evaluation of pre-thirteenth-century argumentation is somewhat more difficult. There surely was consideration given to arguments that would be persuasive to Jews. While this, as we have seen, was not the only function of the *adversus Judaeos* literature, such literature had to bear some relation to Jewish thinking. Let us look in a bit more detail at the main lines of Christian conversionist argumentation directed toward the Jews. Such an examination must address itself to the substance of the issues discussed and—more important—to the bases on which the arguments rest.[15]

Effective religious argumentation of necessity involves both a positive and a negative thrust. The spokesman for a given religious faith normally sets out to prove the essential truth of his tradition and the fundamental shortcomings of the faith of his listener or reader. Seen in this fashion, the substance of Christian anti-Jewish argumentation is fairly straightforward and can be identified in terms of a series of contrasting statements. (1) Christianity represents the fulfillment of the biblical covenant, while Judaism is debased distortion of that covenant. More specifically, Christian spokesmen argued that Jesus was

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the promised Messiah and Redeemer and the church established in the wake of his mission represented the continuation of the Israel that had first fathomed the existence of the one true God and, in return, had been promised great blessing by that God. By contrast, the Jewish people, biologically the heirs of biblical Israel, had forfeited all right to that blessing. (2) Christianity represents a system through which the believer can achieve salvation, while Judaism is misguided in its religious directives: it is at best useless, at worst harmful. (3) The Christian Church has both a distinguished present and—more important—a brilliant future. Judaism is demeaned in its present circumstances and has lost all hope for a meaningful future. The final act in its history can only be its disappearance.

More important than the basic assertions were the foundations on which these claims rested. The overwhelming proportion of this argumentation was rooted in Christological exegesis of the Hebrew Bible. As we noted at the outset, Judaism and Christianity shared a common religious literature and a common sense that it represented the essentials of divinely revealed truth. Given the sense that God had directly transmitted his truth to mankind and that this truth was embodied in the biblical corpus, proper understanding of the Scriptures afforded the simplest and most straightforward avenue to the truth. Thus, for example, the Christian sense that Jesus of Nazareth represented clear and unequivocal fulfillment of scriptural prophecy concerning the Messiah provided, from the Christian perspective, the most telling possible argument to be used with Jews. Likewise, claims that the Church represented the continuation of biblical Israel and that the directives of the Church could be clearly discerned in the literature of divine revelation constituted the most convincing claims that could be advanced to anyone, in some senses, particularly to the Jews. Collections of biblical testimonia and argumentation drawn from biblical exegesis abound. The point of all these citations and explications is that the Scriptures, that is, divinely revealed truth, clearly exhibit the irrefutable truth of fundamental Christian teachings.

Evaluating the thinking behind these truth claims is difficult, indeed, in most instances, impossible. Were the authors of such tracts themselves convinced of the efficacy of these arguments? Since the same claims were useful for internal Christian purposes and could even be utilized in attracting non-Christians other than Jews, it is generally impossible to assess the seriousness of the intent to missionize among the Jews. Nevertheless, it seems clear that, while many Chris-

tian authors may have been genuinely convinced of the potential impact of such argumentation among the Jews, there was little or no effort to weigh such impact realistically. Given the rich Christian exegetical tradition, it must have been fairly obvious that the Jews also had an exegetical tradition of their own, which might run counter to Christian claims. Before the thirteenth century, we note little Christian awareness of this Jewish exegetical tradition and even less utilization of it for missionizing purposes. Again, this leads us to question the intensity of the sporadic efforts to convert the Jews.

While biblically based argumentation certainly predominated in pre-thirteenth-century conversionist efforts among the Jews, a number of alternative approaches are in evidence. One utilized the contemporary criteria of rationality to argue for the truth of Christianity (and hence the error of Judaism). Early in its development, Christianity had absorbed much of the Greco-Roman commitment to philosophic inquiry. There developed a sense that the revealed truth of Christian faith and philosophic truth could only be one and the same. Given this profound conviction, it was inevitable that philosophic inquiry and conclusions eventually would be turned into weapons to be utilized in the battle for the souls of nonbelievers. While this philosophic impulse waned considerably in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, the powerful revitalization of the eleventh and twelfth centuries brought with it a renewed passion for philosophic inquiry and a renewed conviction of the fundamental rationality of Christianity and the essential irrationality of all other faiths. Thus, during these centuries, a recurrent thrust in Christian argumentation aimed at the Jews was the philosophic truth of Christian doctrine. Once more, the view is that key Christian beliefs are indisputably true, with such truth claims now rooted in philosophic considerations.[16] Such argumentation may have been directed at Jews, but it served an equally useful function in buttressing Christian belief. Moreover, its utility was limited to a rather thin stratum of society—those, both Jewish and Christian, who were intellectually capable of sophisticated reasoning and emotionally ready to be moved by its conclusions.

Yet another approach utilized in pre-thirteenth-century Christian argumentation aimed at the Jews was drawn from empirical observation. The claim was that direct observation of contemporary realities would indicate clearly and convincingly the superiority of Christianity. For example, traditional in all intergroup religious polemics is the claim that the standard of behavior associated with the in-group's re-

ligious faith is far higher than that associated with the belief system of the out-group. Christian anti-Jewish argumentation, from early on, had harshly criticized aspects of Jewish behavior, particularly those associated with rigorous fidelity to Jewish law, which Christianity, after all, saw as outmoded. As we approach the thirteenth century, an innovative theme emerges—criticism of the new economic specialization in moneylending by northern European Jews. The historical factors that gave rise to this new Jewish specialization lie beyond the province of this study. What is important here is that moneylending, traditionally an unpopular occupation, quickly made its appearance in religious argumentation, serving (overtly or covertly) to buttress the general Christian claim of moral superiority—

hence, religious truth-and Jewish moral inferiority.[17] A second important line of Christian argumentation drawn ostensibly from empirical observation involved historical realities, the perceived patterns of Christian and Jewish fate. As Christianity spread and, in particular, when it assumed a position of political dominance in the Roman Empire, it was almost inevitable that a sense of numerical and political supremacy would be translated into a sense of religious truth. To the Christian mind, it was from this that demographic and social success had eventuated. This old argument had gained much strength by the thirteenth century. In the vigorous and expanding Christendom of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, where the Jews were in some areas a small, old segment of the population and in other areas a relatively tiny, new group, the sense of meaningful correlation between religious truth and social, economic, political, and military might was intense.[18] It hardly bears repeating that these empirically based claims, while they surely may have had an impact on Jewish audiences, were useful in buttressing Christian belief, and again there seems to have been little effort to look within the Jewish community and ascertain the defenses it had long ago erected against such Christian assertions.

In sum, there may have been some development of serious argumentation designed to convince Jews of the truth of Christianity, but the evidence is not impressive. Instead, the tendency seems toward utilization of fairly standardized and traditional arguments, rarely, if ever, assessed realistically for their actual impact on Jewish auditors or readers.

In fact, it is clear that the Jews within the orbit of Christendom early on developed a full set of responses to the various lines of argumentation just delineated. In assessing these responses, it must be re-

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called that, for long periods of time, most of world Jewry was outside Christendom's sphere of influence and therefore was not vitally concerned with the thrusts of Christianity (either explicitly or implicitly). Specifically, this involves the major Jewry of Mesopotamia during late antiquity and the larger Jewries of the early medieval Muslim world. Only those Jewish communities situated in a predominantly Christian environment were absorbed with the task of reacting to Christian argumentation: (1) the shrinking Jewry of the Roman Empire during late antiquity, which has left us no significant Jewish literature;[19] (2) the ongoing Jewry of the Byzantine Empire, which has left us few pre-thirteenth-century materials;[20] and (3) the emergent Jewries of revitalized pre-thirteenth-century western Christendom, some of whose literary productivity has survived. This latter material gives us our fullest sense of Jewish lines of response to Christian argumentation.

In defending themselves from perceived Christian thrusts, both positive and negative, Jews responded in a double fashion. They argued that Judaism was the true faith (i.e., that the Christian negative assessments were wrong) and that Christianity showed serious, indeed fatal, flaws (i.e., that the positive Christian assertions were in error). While it was often impossible to ascertain whether Christian arguments were intended to win over Jews, whether their purpose was to reinforce the beliefs of the Christian community,

or whether—on occasion—they might have been created to serve as an element in missionizing among other nonbelieving groups, the Jewish polemic statements—whether defensive or offensive—were clearly meant for internal purposes only, to buttress the faith of Jews. There were, to be sure, occasional instances of Christian conversion to Judaism, despite the overt prohibition of such acts and the dangers involved, but such limited conversionist potential could not give rise to a significant missionizing literature. To the extent that we encounter a Jewish polemical literature, it is clearly intended for buttressing Jewish faith only.

The centrality of scriptural exegesis in Christian polemical literature is reflected in the parallel emphasis on biblical verses and their meaning in the Jewish literature of response. Indeed, modern scholars have long been aware of anti-Christian argumentation in many of the standard biblical commentaries composed by Jews in eleventh- and twelfth-century western Christendom.[21] In the twelfth century, we encounter a major work composed specifically of, and devoted primarily to, anti-Christian biblical exegesis, *Milhamot[\*]ha-Shem* (The Wars

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of the Lord) by Jacob ben Reuben. In this important work, the author proceeds book by book and verse by verse, adducing Christological interpretations of key biblical verses and then vigorously rebutting these interpretations.[22] The Jews of western Christendom were surely deeply aware of the importance of this argumentation to the Christian camp and had developed, prior to the thirteenth century, an extensive literature of refutation.

The renewed claims for the rationality of Christian faith are similarly reflected, albeit less fulsomely, in Jewish literature of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Jewish authors responded to these renewed Christian claims by reiterating traditional Jewish arguments for the simplicity and rationality of Jewish beliefs and the irrationality of fundamental tenets of Christian dogma, with a heavy emphasis on the doctrines of Incarnation and Trinity. Thus, the first chapter of the twelfth-century *Milhamot[\*]ha-Shem* presents a careful and critical look at key Christian doctrines, while the contemporary *Sefer ha-Berit* (Book of the Covenant) argues simultaneously for the rationality of Jewish doctrine and the essential irrationality of Christian belief.[23]

Jews were also aware of the empirically based argumentation and countered with claims of their own. To pursue the examples cited above, Jews made their own assessment of relative moral and ethical standards. They were fully prepared to argue strenuously for the higher ethical standards of their community, to criticize vigorously the flaws of Christian society, and to assert that this moral differential was an inevitable concomitant of religious truth and error.[24] Jews were similarly prepared to argue the empirically observable differences in social and political strength. While the reality of far greater Christian numbers and power could not be disputed, the meaning of such temporal superiority could. Jews argued that this imbalance in Christian and Jewish material strength was all part of the divine plan, that Christian

superiority would eventually evaporate (as had the power of earlier empires), and that an exalted Jewish status would eventuate—if Jewish behavior and belief were such as to warrant the advent of messianic redemption.[25] In some ways, this line of Jewish argumentation threw the issue back into the arena of biblical exegesis, with both sides claiming to fathom properly the cryptic scriptural message of divine redemption. In this sense, Jews argued that redemption could not be understood on the basis of empirical observation, since sensory perceptions could be misleading. Full understanding of

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the redemptive process could only come about as the result of the proper reading of the biblical message.

The most important point for our purposes is the general lack of concern with and awareness of this elaborate Jewish argumentation in the Christian camp. Only when Christian spokesmen began to look carefully into the Jewish community they intended to address, to acquaint themselves with contemporary Jewish thinking, and to take that thinking into account in structuring their proofs for the superiority of Christianity and the inferiority of Judaism could truly serious missionizing efforts be launched.

In a general way, then, based on our criteria, or elements, of intensive missionizing—allocation of extensive resources, adumbration of techniques for regularly confronting Jews with Christians claims, and elaboration of argumentation based on full awareness of contemporary Jewish thinking—we are justified in concluding that pre-thirteenth-century Christendom shows almost no evidence of serious proselytizing among the Jews. This changes dramatically during the middle decades of the thirteenth century; the details of this new missionizing are the focus of this study. Before proceeding to these decades of change, we should pause briefly to note a few twelfth-century figures who show some signs of the new proselytizing ardor and, more important, some indications of the techniques that will comprise part of the new campaign.

## **Twelfth-Century Harbingers of the New**

It is now widely agreed that the late eleventh and twelfth centuries constituted a remarkably creative epoch in the history of western Christendom. The growth and change that marked this period led Charles Homer Haskins to speak of a "twelfth-century renaissance," R. W. Southern to call it a "secret revolution," and the conveners of an extraordinary conference on the period to designate it a "renaissance and renewal." The hallmarks of this dynamic age were accelerating population growth, rapid economic expansion, increasing stabilization of political boundaries and establishments, and exciting new intellectual and spiritual horizons.[26]

It is the new awareness of a larger and more complex macrocosm and microcosm that is of great importance to us. As the result of a variety of factors, western Christendom gained a new sense of a vast

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world surrounding it, full of the potential for good and threatening dangers. It likewise began to grapple with a rich, enlivening, and problematic intellectual legacy from antiquity which was rapidly becoming a source of stimulation and challenge. The complexities of the inner world of men and women, so long closed off, began at this same juncture to assert themselves as well.

In all of this, the relatively small Jewish population of western Christendom played a modest role or, better, a series of modest roles. The Jews served as cultural go-betweens, aiding in the process of rediscovering the legacy of antiquity; by their very presence, they served to raise disturbing questions in a society now aware of a large and threatening outside world. Since the Jews themselves were caught up in the new creativity of this dynamic age, on occasion they overtly challenged the beliefs and practices of the larger society that hosted them.[27]

Not surprisingly, then, a new sense of the Jews began inchoately to manifest itself. This new view, like so much of the internal life of the period, was ambivalent and ambiguous. On the one hand, the Jews were slowly beginning to be perceived as threatening, part of the vast array of outside forces ranged against the Christian world. This view expresses itself in popular terms in the anti-Jewish excesses of the fringe crusading bands of 1096 and in the twelfth-century slanders that accuse the Jews of horrifying anti-Christian actions. It expresses itself more slowly in a more authoritative view that Jewish religious beliefs are harmful to Christendom and should be aggressively combated. On the other hand, in a more positive vein, Jews—along with the rest of the world—are perceived as potential converts to Christianity, a faith seen as increasingly rational and appealing by many of its adherents. To be sure, these tendencies are noted only fitfully during the late eleventh and twelfth centuries; they are, as Southern has said, mere "portents of things to come."

For us, concerned with the history of Christian missionizing among the Jews, there is little change to note prior to the middle decades of the thirteenth century. David Berger argues for attitudes ranging from indifference to outright hostility toward missionizing among the Jews.[28] He notes three twelfth-century exceptions to this general pattern. The first of these, an obscure cleric named Odo, part of the school of Peter Abelard, devoted a disproportionate segment of his *Ysagoge in Theologiam* to argumentation against the Jews. His discussion of the Jews is prefaced by the following: "For, if it is proper

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for us to exhort those who are fashioned in the faith to live better, surely we should recall the Jews from their erroneous disbelieving sect."<sup>[29]</sup> Another figure concerned with missionizing to the Jews was the unusual and influential Joachim da Fiora. While caught up in broad speculations concerning the dawning of a new age—a phenomenon regularly associated in Christian thinking with massive conversion of the

Jews-Joachim does, in addition, address more immediate and prosaic issues of argumentation against the Jews.[30] The third and most interesting and important figure is Peter the Venerable. He captures best the mood that will come to dominate during the middle decades of the thirteenth century—a sense of the nullity of Judaism and the debased state of its adherents combined with the hope associated with the prospect of converting these obstinate and unfortunate human beings to a vision of the truth. In Peter's polemic, to be sure, the negative tone tends to outweigh the more positive and charitable. Nonetheless, overall he is the most significant of these three men, for he heralds the new stance that will become the norm by the 1240s.[31]

One further observation is in order. These twelfth-century figures introduce us to the new mid-thirteenth-century tendencies not only in their genuine drive to missionize among the Jews but also in their early sense of the need to develop new proselytizing argumentation by gaining better awareness of the Jewish psyche and its patterns of thought. Odo focuses his attention on the Hebrew language, arguing that, for the purposes of successful missionizing among the Jews, it is necessary to develop skills in Hebrew, for the specific purpose of blunting the Jewish claim that scriptural proofs advanced by Christians miss the mark because of an inability to address the original text. Christians concerned with converting Jews, he argues, must be in a position to overcome this standard Jewish ploy. This can only be achieved by meeting the Jews on their own ground, that is, the sacred texts in their original idiom. Striking here is a sense of the Jews and their traditional lines of opposition to Christian argumentation. In that regard, Odo is indeed a precursor of the mid-thirteenth-century figures we will study in greater detail.

Peter the Venerable takes another approach. Well known for his concern to make the Koran available to Christian readers for missionizing purposes, he is responsible for introducing the Talmud into the missionizing context. To be sure, his method is not terribly creative. He essentially turns the fifth of his five books of anti-Jewish polemic into an effort to convince the Jews of the absurdity of their religious

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belief by confronting them with the intellectual depravity of rabbinic fables.[32] Peter operates within the context of the new spirit of western Christendom—a restless search for new knowledge and a commitment to its creative utilization. In a certain sense, he foreshadows both the thirteenth-century attack on the Talmud and the thirteenth-century utilization of the Talmud for proselytizing purposes. But the specifics of his approach bear little promise. Convincing the Jews to abandon Judaism by holding up to ridicule the literature they know well and venerate seems unlikely to achieve success. Nonetheless, the underlying sense that the Jews must be met and challenged on the battleground of their own tradition, that the Christian missionizing enterprise must take account of traditional patterns of Jewish thinking and turn that thinking to Christian advantage—these perceptions do indeed make Peter a precursor of the new missionizing.

One must beware of reading too much into these fleeting hints of something yet to come. But it seems fair to identify the beginnings of the new missionizing in the altered spirit of late-eleventh- and twelfth-century western Christendom. More specifically, there are glimmers of a more serious interest in missionizing among the Jews and vague hints of new tactics in argumentation. For actualization, these potential new directions required the altered environment of the mid-thirteenth century, with its more cohesive ecclesiastical organization, its more serious grappling with the issue of non-Christians and their religious views, its fuller commitment to a war of words against the infidel world, and its readiness to commit the necessary intellectual resources to an expensive and protracted proselytizing campaign.

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## The Thirteenth Century

During the thirteenth century, western Christendom, building on the sturdy foundations of eleventh- and twelfth-century progress, continued to press forward on several fronts. The population continued to grow; the area of land cleared for agriculture expanded; industry and commerce developed. Related to these developments was enhanced sophistication in political organization. Increasingly large, powerful, and well-organized political units began to emerge in western Christendom, although the most impressive of the pre-thirteenth-century states, that ruled by the German emperor, proved incapable of maintaining itself; it began to disintegrate, plunging Germany into the political weakness that was to plague it into the nineteenth century. Paralleling the decline of the German state, however, was the formation of strong, stable monarchies in England, France, Aragon, and Castile. These extensive and well-run states reflected the increasing sophistication of European society; at the same time, they played a not inconsiderable role in furthering the positive development of European civilization.<sup>[1]</sup> Improvements in the organizational sphere are similarly notable in the Roman Catholic Church. The bishops exercised greater and greater control over everyday matters in their individual dioceses. Above these bishops stood an ever more powerful papal court, intervening in affairs throughout western Christendom in much the same augmented fashion as the bishops in their own domains. Never before had its leadership controlled so effectively the multifaceted activity of the organized Church. The emergence of innovative forms of ecclesiastical organization, particularly the new orders directly allied with the papacy itself, is especially noteworthy. As we shall see, the Dominicans and the Franciscans played a central role in the new missionizing, in particular, in that branch devoted to the Jews.<sup>[2]</sup>

Out of these broad improvements in economic and organizational life—or perhaps only parallel to them—came positive developments

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in the intellectual and spiritual spheres as well. A new institutional framework for intellectual activity was created. The beginning of the thirteenth century saw the founding of the European universities, institutions that quickly supplanted the old monastic centers of learning and the loose schools that had begun to develop in the major urban enclaves of northern Europe. These new universities were very well equipped to foster the intellectual creativity of rapidly maturing western Christendom.[3] The boundaries of awareness continued to expand. European Christians learned more and more of the vastness of the world that existed outside their borders. This world was perceived as replete with exciting possibilities and opportunities and, at the same time, fraught with danger. Yet more important than growing awareness of the outside world was continued retrieval of the lost intellectual legacy of antiquity. By the middle decades of the thirteenth century, for example, almost the entire Aristotelian corpus had been reclaimed. This recovery of the intellectual riches of antiquity—like so much else that we have described—was not without its problems. These notwithstanding, the stimulation to intellectual development was incalculable. Finally, awareness of the complexities of the inner world of men and women also expanded. New sensitivities to human feeling and to the complexities of human perception and understanding began to be manifested. All of this represented impressive achievement, required substantial effort at control of proliferating information and insight, and often raised serious anxieties and doubts.[4]

From one perspective, then, the thirteenth century can be seen as a period of incomparable material and spiritual strength. Rarely in history has such an extensive area been seemingly so thoroughly unified under the banner of a well-organized and powerful religious organization. The remarkable summae of the period convey a sense of confidence in the capacity of the human mind to achieve understanding, in the orderliness of Christian religious tradition, and in the rationality of the Church's teaching. From this perspective, the enhanced ecclesiastical commitment to missionizing can be seen as a reflection of the brimming confidence of the Christian world at this juncture. Sure of itself and its teaching, the Church committed itself in unusual measure to the effort to carry its incontrovertible position to those outside itself, or, in other words, to those in error.

But these positive developments had an underside. As always, heady achievement raised new problems and issues. Greater awareness of the outside world shattered some of the earlier misplaced self-

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confidence of aggressive eleventh- and twelfth-century European society. With greater knowledge of the extent of Muslim power, simplistic visions of military confrontation and decisive victory gave way. Fuller absorption of the intellectual legacy of antiquity raised a host of difficult intellectual problems. The majesty of the thirteenth-century syntheses of Greek philosophy and Christian tradition by such luminaries as Saint Thomas Aquinas cannot obscure the internal discomfort that the Greek legacy occasioned. Greater sensitivity to the inner workings of the human soul similarly provoked new questions and doubts. Disquiet on the part of individuals inevitably coalesced into broader societal concern and doubt, and, not surprisingly, the century of impressive Church organization and intellectual strength was also a century of significant heresy. Throughout western Christendom, but particularly in the

Mediterranean areas, the flood of new perceptions and ideas resulted in the development of strikingly innovative teachings.[5] As the agency responsible for monitoring the spiritual climate of western Christendom, the Church had to assess these teachings. On occasion, they were successfully assimilated into the body of existing doctrine and into the organized life of the Church. More often, the conclusion was that the new ideas crossed the limits of the permissible and had to be rejected. Such rejection meant inevitably that these ideas had to be fought and repressed. Thus, the apparent strength and well-being of the Church was balanced by uncertainty and anxiety. Neither for the first time nor for the last, a period of vigor and progress was also a period of insecurity and concern.

As the ecclesiastical leadership of western Christendom marshaled its forces to confront the dangerous developments of the thirteenth century, the highest priority had to be assigned to combating internal heresy. No external danger—at least at this period—could match in significance the threat the heretics posed to the entire fabric of Christian society. Extensive resources of all kinds were allocated to the struggle against dissidence. The assistance of the secular authorities was regularly enlisted—despite the problems involved—in the repression of dissident movements. Clearly, the battle had to be waged on many fronts, ranging from physical repression to spiritual confrontation. From the drive to engage the heretics on a spiritual battlefield emerged the Dominican Order. Convinced that ultimate victory over the heretics of southern France could only be achieved by addressing those in error on intellectual and spiritual grounds, Saint Dominic proposed the development of a cadre of preachers who would be in-

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tellectually capable of debating issues of doctrine and spiritually appealing enough to win over the hearts of the dissidents. While the history of the Franciscan Order is somewhat different, it too early on joined itself to the struggle against heresy, again operating on the assumption that intellectual expertise and spiritual elevation would be required to win the struggle against error. Both orders quickly found an important place in the newly emergent institutional framework of intellectual life, the universities. From this vantage point, they became important internal forces in Christian society, evaluators of correct and incorrect and permissible and impermissible, and aggressive opponents of that which they perceived as erroneous and dangerous.[6]

As Christian society looked outside itself, the most obvious and pervasive danger was posed by the world of Islam. The exhilaration that had accompanied the conquest of Jerusalem in the summer months of 1099 was gone. Further contact and engagement had revealed a Muslim world that was more extensive than heretofore imagined. To be sure, during the twelfth century, Christendom made signal gains, and during the thirteenth century, those gains were augmented. But even while these advances were being achieved, there was growing awareness that the Muslims' reservoir of strength was enormous and no rapid and decisive victory could be expected. Voices in Christendom began to suggest alternative approaches to the Muslim enemy. On a practical level, there was increasing cooperation in some sectors of the Mediterranean basin. More important, leading ecclesiastics on occasion suggested that the proper theater of battle and the one in which Christian strength would be invincible lay in the realm of the spirit.

Out of this shifting of priorities came an innovative missionizing campaign aimed at the Muslims. As Kedar has convincingly shown, missionizing did not definitively supplant crusading. The two were viewed as alternative tactics to be used against a foe whose resources were richer than earlier suspected.[7]

What was particularly striking about this new missionizing was the seriousness with which it approached the religious tradition of the Muslims. Those leading the effort recognized fairly quickly that, just as the military resources of the Muslims could no longer be dismissed, so too their spiritual resources could not be ignored. Here, of course, respect had limits. The Muslim religious tradition could not be positively evaluated. Nonetheless, it was now deemed necessary to take Muslim teachings seriously enough to learn something about them and combat them with insight and intelligence. The pioneering figure

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in this was Peter the Venerable, and the key to his pioneering efforts lay in his stress on the importance of affording access to the classics of Islam, thus setting the stage for combating the ideas they contained. As was true for his innovative approach to Jewish tradition, his attack on Islam remained quite primitive, focusing on ridiculing the minimal information then available. The confrontation with Muslim ideas would have to become—and, in fact, did become—far more sophisticated. But Peter's emphasis on knowledge of the Islamic sources was the beginning of a serious confrontation with Islamic thought.[8] As commitment to spiritual engagement deepened and as confidence in the positive outcome of such spiritual combat increased, the tactical difficulties in presenting the argumentation for Christian truth began to assume greater significance. How were ecclesiastics trained to preach the truth of Christianity and reveal the error of Islam, to penetrate the borders of the Islamic world and lay their arguments before the appropriate audience? A number of approaches were taken—efforts to engage at least the ruling class of Islamic society, military conquest as a means of opening the way for spiritual confrontation, and audacious acts of martyrdom that could not be overlooked by Muslims outside the borders of Christendom and therefore outside the coercive force of the Christian authorities. The difficulties in engaging Muslims in this innovative missionizing effort remained considerable, however.[9]

Of course, there were some Muslims, particularly on the Iberian Peninsula, who lived legitimately under the protection of the Christian kings who had brought increasingly large areas of southern Europe under Christian control. There was little difficulty in engaging such subject Muslims in religious debate under circumstances optimal to the Christian cause. Indeed, these Muslims were, in many cases, prime sources for gaining a command of Arabic and, therefore, knowledge of Islamic literature. Thus, in many senses, they were extremely important to the new missionizing effort, affording the basic information on which it rested and serving as a testing ground for relatively simple implementation of the innovative argumentation. The key figure in this enterprise is generally considered to be Friar Raymond of Peñafort. A man of great energy and diverse abilities, he served as director general of the Dominican Order, confessor to Pope Gregory IX, compiler of the *Decretales*, and as a decisively influential figure in the Spanish Church. One of the projects in which Friar Raymond immersed himself was the creation of an infrastructure through

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which the proper argumentation for winning over the Muslims could be developed. By the mid-thirteenth century, a number of schools of Arabic had been established in Spain, with the overriding goal being the training of missionizing personnel. Armed with knowledge of Arabic, Dominicans like Friar Raymond Martin composed manuals to guide their confreres through the vagaries of Muslim thinking, never for the purpose of dispassionate scholarship but always with the goal of preparation for spiritual jousting.[10]

Discussion of the subject Muslims leads to the issue of the Jews. The Jews within the orbit of Christendom, as well as those living outside its perimeters, did not present themselves as prime dangers or major objects of concern. The basic reason for this was the limited number of Jews both inside and outside Christendom. Nonetheless, they could not be overlooked entirely. In many areas of Christendom, Jews constituted the only legitimate dissenting group, and their regulation could not be neglected. To overlook the Jews would be to court danger. In a society committed to enhanced clarification of the demands of Christian living and to more exacting fulfillment of these demands, the issue of the Jews resident within Christendom, while not a priority of the highest order, had to be addressed. Beyond this, there was the ongoing sense that the Jews represented a muted, continuous reproach to Christians. Given the combination of certainty and insecurity that we have already identified, there was renewed sensitivity to the age-old question of how those people most directly conversant with God's initial revelation could fail to read its implications correctly. This made the Jews, for some in the Church, a matter of greater concern than their limited numbers warranted. Finally, there is an element of the irrational as well. In a society frightened by new awareness of the size and complexity of the external and internal world, dangers were perceived at every turn. Irrational suggestions about Jewish malevolence and power had already begun to circulate in the twelfth century. During the thirteenth century, these stereotypes proliferated, raising wholly unrealistic fears of potential harm that might flow from the Jews.[11]

Before approaching directly the issue of missionizing among the Jews, let us look briefly at the general stance of the Church toward the Jewish residents of western Christendom. The doctrine that had developed as early as the fourth century, with the accession of Christianity to power in the Roman Empire, announced the fundamental legiti-

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macy of Judaism in preredemptive Christian society. What was probably at the outset the result of political and social considerations was soon reinforced with theological underpinnings. The notion of the legitimacy of Judaism, however, in no sense implied carte blanche for all forms of Jewish behavior. Key to this notion was the sense of intrinsic limitations on their freedom of action, the essential thrust of which involved the impropriety of any Jewish behavior that might entail harm to the Christian host society. Jews were free to live as Jews so long as their behaviors did not damage the society that had extended its hospitality to them.[12]

The most traditional form of potential Jewish harm imagined by Christian societies was intrusion on the proper religiosity of Christians. Jewish impact on the religious behavior of Christians was outlawed, with drastic punishments specified for both the Christian victim and the Jewish malefactor. Punishment after the fact was not sufficient. It was also the Church's responsibility to obviate the kind of contact that might result in untoward religious influence. Many of the earliest regulations concerning Jewish behavior within Christendom address precisely this issue. It is on these grounds that marriage between Christian and Jew was prohibited, that Jewish ownership of Christian slaves was outlawed, and that Jews were forbidden to hold public office. In all these instances, the fear was that the leverage Jews would enjoy therefrom might be used to influence the religious practices and beliefs of the Christian involved in the relationship. Focusing on this issue enables us to adduce a striking example of the general tendency toward extending and intensifying prior limitations which characterized ecclesiastical innovativeness of the thirteenth century. One may legitimately question whether the danger of contamination of Christian belief by contact with Jews was in actuality enhanced during this century. Whether it was or was not, the Church did extend the restrictions intended to obviate potentially harmful contact. By the middle of the century, the Church had begun lobbying intensively for a new and more far-reaching set of restrictions, especially prohibition of Jews living in rural areas, where Christian-Jewish contact was almost inevitable, and limitation of casual encounter through legislation of distinguishing garb. With the enactment of distinguishing Jewish garb among the proceedings of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, the drive toward minimizing the danger of Jewish religious influence by restricting normal social contact in the severest possible

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way reached its apogee.[13] The tendency toward such radical reworking of a traditional concern serves as an excellent illustration of the general tenor of the period.

At this same juncture, a completely new area of concern emerged. Previously, concern with Jewish economic activity had been minimal to nonexistent. Reference to it is only in the larger context of social relations, for example, the issue of slaveholding. During the twelfth century, as the Church intensified its drive against Christian usury, the economic needs of this expansive period, in particular, the need for capital, opened the way for Jewish involvement in moneylending. The political authorities recognized these needs and also saw in this Jewish specialization a source of potential profit on a grand scale. The result was the emergence of the Jewish moneylender as a figure of significance, especially, though not exclusively, in northern Europe.[14] By the early thirteenth century, the Church, which had in some respects paved the way for them, was deeply concerned with the harm Jewish moneylenders might perpetrate. Here, of course, we move beyond the immediate realm of religious impact into the broader sphere of societal well-being. The Church, which often acted as spokesman for the underprivileged, saw itself bound to lobby on behalf of those suffering under the burden of Jewish usury. Thus, the same Fourth Lateran Council that demanded distinguishing Jewish garb also enjoined the princes of Christendom to prevent the Jews from exacting "heavy and immoderate usury" from their Christian debtors. Although the precise line of demarcation between normal and permissible usury and that which was deemed heavy

and immoderate was not spelled out in the conciliar edict, there is a general sense that up to 20 percent was to be acceptable, while any amount beyond that was not. The fundamental notion of the Jews as tolerated guests who must not abuse the hospitality extended to them by behaving in a manner harmful to their hosts is operative here once more.[15]

Another stunningly new expression of this underlying concern manifested itself during the middle and late 1230s. In addition to the traditional sense that Jews must not harm Christians, it was also assumed that they must in no way demean or denigrate Christianity. To be sure, Christians historically suspected that Jews did in fact behave among themselves in this unacceptable fashion. Given the generally vituperative tone of interfaith exchange in that period, this was a reasonable—and accurate—assumption. Just as Christians reviled Judaism, so too Jews spoke derogatorily of Christianity, although in the

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latter case *sotto voce* rather than publicly and openly. In the mid-1230s, a convert from Judaism to Christianity confronted the leadership of the Church with evidence that what had long been suspected was true. The reality of Jewish blaspheming of Christianity was intolerable, of course, and the Church, again committed at this juncture to eradicating significant discrepancies between theory and practice, could not sit idly by.

Because much has been written on the campaign against the Talmud, because it is so illustrative of the mood of the Church during the middle decades of the thirteenth century, and because it is, in a number of ways, linked with the new missionizing efforts, we must accord it brief attention. The instigator of this new thrust at identifying and eliminating Jewish harmfulness was a convert, Nicholas Donin. Unfortunately, no real evidence remains on this shadowy figure, who is known only from his anti-Jewish activities of the 1230s and 1240s. Donin approached the papal court—through what intermediaries it is not clear—with a series of broad allegations against the Talmud.[16] One set of claims involved internal Jewish discomfort with the Talmud, a sense that it represented deviation from the norms of biblical teaching. Although given an initial hearing by the officials of the papal court, this line of attack was quickly dropped.[17] More important from the point of view of the Church were the allegations that the Talmud sanctioned, and even recommended, behaviors that were anti-Christian (contravening the prohibition of actions harmful to the Christian host society), that it contained material that blasphemed Christianity (yet another kind of harm), and that it taught doctrines that were fundamentally absurd and hence intolerable.[18] All these allegations were based on firsthand reading of the talmudic sources and roused considerable concern in ecclesiastical circles. Donin had initiated a new area in management of the Jews.

After receiving a careful hearing in the papal court, Donin was dispatched into the kingdoms of western Christendom, charged with responsibility for looking further into the allegations and, where they might be proved accurate, rectifying the intolerable situation. As was the case for all Church programs related to the Jews, this one could not be executed without the support of the secular authorities who functioned

as the suzerains of the Jews. These authorities were little interested in the new set of charges and the new ecclesiastical concern. One major figure provided an important exception, and that was King Louis IX of France. With his support and with the assistance of

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the Dominicans and Franciscans of Paris, whose involvement in the anti-Talmud campaign was a reasonable extension of their general responsibility for the propriety of doctrine in Christian society, a trial of the Talmud was convened, and a number of the major rabbinic authorities of northern France were forced to serve as witnesses. As was perceptively noted many years ago by the late Yitzhak Baer, the procedure in Paris during spring 1240 was essentially an inquisitorial investigation of the Talmud, with the rabbis serving as witnesses for the prosecution.<sup>[19]</sup> Jewish denials and protestations notwithstanding, the Talmud was found guilty. The sentence decreed against the offending text was extreme: it was sentenced to burning, and the Jews were forbidden from using the allegedly intolerable text. This was a grievous blow to Jewish life and occasioned strenuous negotiations with the papal court for mitigation. Interestingly, the tack the Jews took in the wake of the trial and condemnation of the Talmud was not to overturn the verdict but rather to mitigate the sentence. These Jews claimed that without the Talmud Jewish life would be impossible and thus the traditional Christian toleration of Jewish life would de facto cease. The case was successfully argued before the papal court. The papacy, which had set the campaign in motion, was responsive to the Jewish argument and suggested to the French royal court that, while the condemnation was just, the sentence should be revised to deletion of offensive passages. In this way, both pressures could be accommodated: the threat to Christian society and Christianity posed by unacceptable talmudic materials would be eliminated, while, at the same time, restoration of the bulk of the Talmud to the Jews would restore the status quo ante of Christian toleration of Judaism and the Jews.<sup>[20]</sup> Although the French royal court was unwilling to modify its harsh sentence—and, in fact, the Talmud was regularly outlawed in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century France—the softer papal position became the norm elsewhere in western Christendom.<sup>[21]</sup> For our purposes, three elements in this anti-Talmud campaign are of greatest significance: (1) again, the sense of a thirteenth-century Church committed to exploring all facets of European life in an effort to bring the realities into consonance with the theory of Christian living; (2) the role played in this endeavor by firsthand familiarity with the post-biblical literature of the Jews; and (3) the significance of converts from Judaism to Christianity in providing stimulation to efforts deleterious to the Jews and in providing the direct data on which such efforts were predicated.

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Thus, the Jews represented one more element in western Christendom with which a more powerful Church was inevitably concerned. How reasonable such concerns were, or how significant a threat the Jews posed, is not at all clear. What is beyond doubt is the inclusion of the issue of the Jews on the agenda of the thirteenth-century Church, not as an item of highest priority but as an item not to be neglected. It is from this basis that we must approach the issue of missionizing among the Jews. The most important group to be confronted in the renewed mid-thirteenth-century commitment to proselytizing was the internal dissidents; they had to be brought back into the fold at all costs. The realities of military and

political power dictated that the Muslims occupy second place on the roster of potential targets. The Jews placed a distant third, for they were not numerically significant, and they showed an age-old recalcitrance that must have dimmed proselytizing enthusiasm. Balancing these negative considerations were a number of positive factors. Unlike the heretics and the Muslims living outside the orbit of Christendom, the Jews (and Muslims living within the Christian sphere) could easily be identified and coerced into hearing the missionizing message. Thus, the tactical problems associated with heretics and the majority of the Muslim world could be eliminated. Moreover, the very recalcitrance of the Jews in a sense made them appealing targets. Since this was a period of intensified commitment to missionizing and of a serious search for new argumentation that would constitute a historic breakthrough, what better test case might be essayed than the Jews. If it were possible to sway significant numbers of this traditionally resistant people, such an achievement would constitute sure evidence of unprecedented success and augur favorably for the broader enterprise. On these grounds, then, an intensified approach to the Jews seemed warranted and worthwhile.

There is yet another factor in the approach to the Jews during the middle decades of the thirteenth century. At this time, there seem to have emerged on the European scene new-style converts from Judaism to Christianity. Such conversion was a relatively common phenomenon during the previous centuries, as was—to a lesser extent—conversion from Christianity to Judaism. The latter was strongly prohibited, since it constituted one of the major fears associated with Jewish presence in Christian society.[22] By and large, it seems that these converts were not drawn from the upper echelons of Jewish society. They appear to have come from the peripheries of the Jewish world

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and to have settled into the peripheries of Christian society. During the middle decades of the thirteenth century, we encounter for the first time, in any numbers, converts who clearly came from a more central position in Jewish life and were absorbed into central sectors of Christian society. Not surprisingly, these converts were caught up in issues related to their former coreligionists. The motivation for such ongoing involvement with Judaism and the Jews constitutes a lively subject for speculation. In part, they may have remained concerned with Judaism because it afforded them an opportunity to utilize expertise they had earlier accumulated and thus to win some standing in their new setting. Beyond this, anti-Jewish efforts may have been perceived by these converts as a means for proving the intensity of their commitment to the new religious faith, a way of announcing publicly that there were no lingering attachments to Judaism and that their allegiance was now reserved exclusively for Christianity. Most interesting is the possibility that anti-Jewish activities may have functioned as a vehicle for combating internal doubts occasioned by the momentous change they had imposed on themselves. Through this medium, these new Christians may have been attempting to quell persistent uncertainty about the wrenching act of conversion. All these suggestions are based on general knowledge of the phenomenon of conversion. Unfortunately, the mid-thirteenth-century converts from Judaism to Christianity have left us no significant data with which to study their attitudes to their former faith and their new religion. The speculation, as intriguing as it might be, must remain simply that. The one solid conclusion we emerge with is that, during the middle decades of the thirteenth century, a small group of former Jews played a significant role in the new missionizing initiatives aimed at the Jews. For, whatever the reasons might have been, they brought into the Church

intensified interest in converting Jews and contributed also an expertise that was to prove valuable in the new proselytizing endeavor.

The general environment of the mid-thirteenth century thus provided powerful stimulus to a serious effort at missionizing among the Jews, an effort that must be seen in part as simply a concomitant of the general tendency of that brilliant period toward intensified fulfillment of all the central demands of Christian living. While forced conversion had long been eschewed by the Church and hopes for a full-scale conversion of the Jews had been relegated to a future time, there remained an obligation to bring the saving message of Christianity to individual Jews. This obligation had by and large been honored in the breach

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during prior centuries. Now, a Christian society committed to narrowing the gap between theory and practice in various spheres of life was ready to shoulder its perceived responsibilities toward the Jews as well. Indeed, missionizing among the Jews was but one more element in a general proselytizing thrust, part of a broader campaign to engage the non-Christian world in spiritual encounter. In one sense, this engagement was undertaken out of profound confidence in the irresistible truth of Christianity; from another perspective, it may reflect the enhanced uncertainty and insecurity associated with the great advances in knowledge that characterized the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. When this new missionizing campaign was undertaken, it was characterized by an unprecedented seriousness of purpose. The resources of a powerful Church were marshaled in support. The Dominican and Franciscan orders became the specialists in this effort, with important expertise provided by former Jews. The leadership of the Church used its formidable lobbying abilities to secure the support of important secular authorities for the campaign, thereby ensuring that the Jews would be regularly exposed to the new missionizing message. Most important, considerable and impressive energies were bent to formulating new lines of argumentation, argumentation that would move far beyond the traditionally unsuccessful claims of the past. The very first step in adumbrating these was an effort to learn more of the Jews and their current thought. Only through understanding the state of the Jewish mind could new claims be developed which might have some chance of penetrating heretofore impregnable Jewish defenses.

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#### **Coercion in the Service of Christian Truth**

In 1240, as we have seen, the convert Nicholas Donin orchestrated a trial of the Talmud in Paris. Utilizing his knowledge of rabbinic literature, he leveled a series of charges against the Talmud, succeeded in winning papal and some secular support, and staged a trial in which the literature of the Jews was found guilty on a number of counts. The result of this verdict was a massive burning of the Talmud and related literature outside Paris in 1242. Quite by coincidence, it is from the same year that we have the first firm evidence of the new-style Christian missionizing among the Jews. This evidence comes from a papal letter of 1245, which encloses an earlier royal edict of King James I of Aragon. The edict addresses a series of issues related to conversion to Christianity and stipulates a number of forms of protection for the convert: (1) he is not to be impeded in the process of conversion; (2) he is to suffer no property loss as a result of conversion; and (3) he is to suffer no social rebuke as a result of conversion. The edict closes on a different note:

Likewise we wish and decree that, whenever the archbishop, bishops, or Dominican or Franciscan friars visit a town or a locale where Saracens or Jews dwell and wish to present the word of God to the said Jews or Saracens, these must gather at their call and must patiently hear their preaching. If they [the Jews or Saracens] do not wish to come of their own will, our officials shall compel them to do so, putting aside all excuses.[1]

This last stipulation establishes an important ongoing technique for bringing the message of Christianity to the potential convert. It is significant, of course, that the Dominicans and Franciscans are mentioned so prominently in the ordering of compulsory Muslim and Jewish attendance at conversionist sermons. As we have seen, these new orders were committed to stemming internal backsliding in

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Christendom and to reaching out for converts from non-Christian society.

Forcing Jews or Muslims to attend conversionist sermons was not unprecedented in Christendom. We have already noted sporadic efforts in this direction. What is new in 1242 is institutionalization of the practice. Jews and Muslims are henceforth to be forced in a regular manner into hearing the message of Christianity. In fact, there is good evidence that, during the middle decades of the thirteenth century, such regularized preaching did occur. How common the new practice was is not clear; it was certainly no longer a random and highly unusual phenomenon.

To be sure, there were theoretical problems associated with the new practice. Given the fundamental safeguards established by the Roman Catholic Church for Jewish life, in particular the prohibition of

forcible conversion, it could be asked whether compelling Jews to attend conversionist sermons did not represent an abrogation of the traditional protections. The point is a fine one. From the Christian side, it could be claimed that conversions achieved through forced sermons would not constitute conversion under duress. While Jews might be compelled to hear the truth, they would ultimately assent to it only by an act of free and independent will. From the Jewish perspective, it could be argued that compulsion was being used at the outset of a process whose culmination might be conversion, thereby abrogating the traditional safeguards erected for Jewish religious liberty.

It is interesting that these considerations are not reflected in Christian sources of the period. There is, however, a revealing echo of these issues in an important mid-thirteenth-century Jewish source from southern France. This text, the *Milhemet[\*]Mizvah[\*]* (The Obligatory War), is an extremely valuable mélange of materials written over a number of decades, from the 1240s through the 1270s, and rich in the social history of this crucial epoch.<sup>[2]</sup> The opening section of this diverse collection includes a reference to the new practice of forced sermons, which had obviously reached the area of Narbonne. The Jewish author is aware of the practice and vigorously opposes it. The issue of forced preaching is raised in the context of a literary discussion between a Christian and a Jew. While this particular dialogue seems fictitious, much of the material in it, including the discussion of forced sermons, depicts accurately new Christian initiatives and the Jewish responses evoked.<sup>[3]</sup>

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Unfortunately, the extant manuscript of the *Milhemet[\*]Mizvah[\*]* begins well into this particular dialogue. The opening statement by the Christian protagonist has been lost; the first material available comes from the middle of the lengthy rebuttal of the Jewish spokesman. From this response, it is fairly easy to reconstruct the arguments attributed to the Christian. How far these Jewish statements reflect Christian thinking of the period is conjecture. In general, however, the *Milhemet Mizvah* is distinguished for its accurate reflection of the real issues agitating mid-thirteenth-century southern French Jewish life. The Jewish author presents three Christian arguments for compelling Jewish attendance at conversionist sermons. Not surprisingly, the first two were drawn from biblical sources, with the third simply an appeal to reason. The first argument was drawn from Deuteronomy 23:8: "You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your kinsman." It is difficult to know how seriously such an argument should be taken; it may reflect no more than semihumorous jousting or the Jewish author's suggestion of the low level of Christian argumentation. Taken at face value, the Christian protagonist argues that there is nothing wrong with Jewish contact with Christians, popularly associated in the medieval Jewish mind with Edom and Edomites.<sup>[4]</sup> Put differently, there is nothing that would prohibit such contact. The second biblically grounded argument is more positive. From the precedent of Jethro's advice to Moses and the Israelites and their full acceptance of that advice, it can be inferred that much of value may be gleaned from the teaching of non-Jews. Thus, compulsory sermons might be a source of genuine enlightenment. The final argument is really the decisive one. This last argument, as reconstructed from the Jewish rebuttal, simply suggests that Christian preaching represents the truth and that Jews should be exposed to it, in the hope that they might accept this truth. This seems to represent the position I have earlier surmised: the means of delivering the truth is irrelevant; it is the truth itself that is decisive.

The Jewish responses to these three arguments—like the purported Christian arguments—range from semi-jocular jousting to intense seriousness. The first Christian argument required little refutation; the Jewish spokesman merely points to the end of the verse cited: "Children born to them may be admitted into the congregation of the Lord in the third generation." What this means is that the injunction not to abhor the Edomite does not address itself to hearing his religious message; it simply put a temporal limit on his exclusion from the Israelite

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community. No sanction for hearing the Edomite's religious message is embodied in this verse.[5]

While neither the first Christian thrust nor the first Jewish parry has an air of deep seriousness about it, the second Christian claim is treated much more carefully. The Jewish disputant contends that, at the time Jethro gave his advice, he had become a worshiper of the God of Israel.

For earlier it is written that Jethro said: "Now I know that the Lord is the greatest of all gods." And it is said: "And Jethro said, 'Blessed be the Lord who has saved you from the power of Egypt and of Pharaoh.' " And he offered sacrifices, as is written: "Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a whole-offering and sacrifices for God."[6]

A second rebuttal suggests that the counsel proffered was qualitatively different from that of Christian preachers. Jethro was advising in the area of administrative efficiency, while Christian preachers were advocating a fundamental change of faith.[7] Finally, the Jew concludes by noting that Jethro's proposals could be checked directly with the divine through the prophetic faculties of Moses. In thirteenth-century Jewry, where prophecy had long since disappeared, no such outside counsel could be countenanced.[8]

Although there is much seriousness about this exchange, the real issue lay in the third Christian claim, and the Jewish rebuttal strikes at the heart of the matter. Again, the Jew responds with a series of answers. These varying replies all rest on one common assumption, however, that Jewish status in medieval Christendom is rooted in the majority's absolute guarantee of the minority's right to live according to its own understanding of its religious heritage.

Indeed you are commanded to protect us and to preserve us in your midst by guarding our religion according to our faith, so that you not cause us to transgress one of the commandments of the Torah according to our understanding of its meaning.[9]

Given this fundamental assumption, the Jew sets out to prove that listening to Christian preaching does in fact constitute a breach of Jewish law and hence is not to be forced on his brethren. The first assertion of such a breach is striking. The Jew contends that, according to Jewish tradition and even according to the Gospels, the Pharisaic contemporaries of Jesus viewed him as a sorcerer. Since the biblical injunction against heeding the sorcerer is strict and Christians ac-

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knowledge that they are the followers of Jesus, Jews are therefore forbidden by their own religious tradition from hearing the Christian message.[10] The negative force of this statement is mitigated somewhat by the author's emphasis on its relativity: according to the Pharisees, Jesus was a sorcerer and hence Jews must not heed his disciples. This is not an absolute indictment. Nonetheless, it is a jarring accusation, and one wonders whether it could be voiced in actual Jewish-Christian discussion. In any event, the conclusion the Jewish disputant reaches is that his coreligionists are prohibited from listening to Christian sermons and Christian law itself forecloses the option of forcing the Jews to trespass their own commandments.

A second contention in the same vein, albeit less derogatory, flows from an important verse in Ezekiel: "No foreigner, uncircumcised in mind and body, shall enter my sanctuary, in order to serve me." [11] The Jewish spokesman asserts (1) according to Jewish law, Christians surely fall into the category of "uncircumcised in mind and body"; (2) preaching is a form of "service"; and (3) the synagogue is a "sanctuary." The inescapable conclusion is that Christian preaching in the synagogue contravenes the prohibition of Ezekiel, as Jewish tradition understood it, and, consequently, that Christendom had no right to enforce such violations on the Jews.[12]

The third counterclaim abandons biblical moorings and is in many ways the most interesting. The author sets forth an elaborate parable of a woman married to a man who has seemingly disappeared. She is subsequently besieged by the attentions of a suitor who is convinced of the husband's demise. The question posed is what advice should be given to such a woman. Should she be counseled to hear the ardent plaints of her suitor, lest she offend him and lose the benefits conferred on her and her children, or should she be required to cease all contact, lest she be seduced into sin? The Jew's decisive conclusion is that all men of good faith would urge such a woman to avoid exposure to temptation at all cost.

Now then understand the parable. For in the Bible you will find in many places that we, the people of Israel, are designated in relation to the Holy One as a woman to her husband, as is written: "For your husband is your maker, whose name is the Lord of Hosts." [13] It is further said: "Your God shall rejoice over you as a bridegroom rejoices over the bride." [14] When they sin, they are likened to a woman who behaves improperly toward her husband, as is written: "Their mother is a wanton; she who conceived them is shameless. . . . Plead my case with your mother, for she is

no longer my wife nor I her husband. Plead with her to forswear those wanton looks, to banish the lovers from her bosom." [15] And when they return in repentance, it is said: "I will betroth you to myself for ever; I will betroth you in lawful wedlock with unfailing devotion and love; I will betroth you to myself firmly; and you shall know the Lord." [16] It is likewise said: "The Lord had acknowledged you as a wife again, once deserted and heart-broken; your God has called you a bride still young though once rejected. On the impulse of the moment I forsook you, but with tender affection I will bring you home again." [17] In sum, there are many verses that attest this. Therefore anyone who wishes to seduce us and to cause us to sin against the divine according to the dictates of our faith, we must not heed him; rather we must even flee if we can be saved in no other way. Indeed if you exert force in this matter, you yourselves will transgress the commandment of your Gospel, in which you are bidden not to cause us to transgress one of the commandments of our Torah according to our faith. [18]

This, then, represents a direct confrontation with the key issue. Forced sermons present the possibility of luring Jews from their ancestral fold. The use of coercion for such a purpose is, to the Jews, a flagrant violation of the basic safeguards historically assured by Christendom.

We have focused thus far on the theoretical issues associated with the new phenomenon of regularized compulsory sermons. This new technique did not remain a matter of theory alone, however. There is substantial evidence for extensive utilization of this new technique during the middle decades of the thirteenth century. Such preaching clearly took place in southern France. Early on in the report of Rabbi Moses ben Nahman on the proceedings in Barcelona, he quotes himself as saying the following to Friar Paul Christian:

Before we debate this, I wish that he would instruct me and indicate how such a thing is possible. Indeed since he journeyed in Provence and in many places, I have heard that he said such things to many Jews and I am astounded at him. [19]

A second attestation to the reality of compulsory sermons in mid-thirteenth-century southern France is found in the Milhemet[\*]Mizvah[\*], which we have already cited. One of the most interesting segments of this useful mélange opens as follows:

This is the beginning of the sermon which I preached after the Dominican friar—not of our faith—spoke in the synagogue before the congregation.

With him was a multitude large and distinguished. Within my sermon were replies to those statements which he made against us on that occasion.[20]

Similarly, there is evidence for exercise of the same compulsion in Spain, particularly in the kingdom of Aragon. The most famous incident of this kind was the historic confrontation in Barcelona in 1263, which I shall analyze fully later. Clearly, however, this was not an isolated incident. There is reference in Nahmanides' report to an earlier colloquy between the rabbi of Gerona and Friar Paul Christian, and, slightly after the proceedings in Barcelona, the synagogue of that city was the site of a set of compulsory sermons, one delivered by Friar Raymond of Penyafort and the second by none other than the King of Aragon.[21] Subsequent to the completion of the Pugio Fidei in 1278, Pope Nicholas III issued a bull ordering preaching to the Jews throughout western Christendom.[22] This call was supported by King Peter III of Aragon, who, on April 19, 1279, ordered his royal officials to aid the preachers by forcing the Jews to receive them in their synagogues.[23] A series of royal letters from June and October of the same year treat at length the untoward side effects of the new preaching campaign, indicating quite clearly that the edict of April 19 was extensively carried out.[24]

While the initial scene of this new-style preaching was southern Europe, the newer Jewish communities of the north were not spared completely. Particularly noteworthy was the support extended by the pious King Louis IX of France to such conversionist efforts in the last years of his life, prior to departure on a second crusading venture, during which he met his death. In 1269, Louis followed the lead of James of Aragon by enacting the following edict:

Since our beloved brother in Christ, Paul Christian of the Order of Preaching Brethren, the bearer of the present letter, wishes and intends, for the glory of the divine name, to preach to the Jews the word of light, in order, we understand, to evangelize for the exaltation of the Christian faith, we order you to force those Jews residing in your jurisdiction to present themselves to hear from him and without objection the word of the Lord and to present their books as the aforesaid brother shall require. You shall compel the Jews to respond fully, without calumny and subterfuge, on those matters which relate to their law, concerning which the aforesaid brother might interrogate them, whether in sermons in their synagogues or elsewhere.[25]

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A valuable Parisian chronicle indicates that this edict was enforced almost immediately.

On the same year [1269], close to Pentecost, a certain brother of the Order of Preaching Brethren . . . came from Lombardy. He had been a Jew and was the highest authority in Mosaic law and in our law. Publicly, in the royal court in Paris and in the court of the Preaching Brethren, he preached to the Jew,

who came there by royal order—showing them that their law was null and worthless, that they had in fact not observed it for a long time, that indeed they daily diverted from all its precepts.[26]

In England as well, a decade later, royal support was elicited in the form of an order by Edward I in 1280 requiring Jewish attendance at conversionist sermons.[27] Across both the southern and northern tiers of western Christendom, the new practice of forced Jewish attendance at missionizing sermons was fully in evidence by the end of this period.

In all these instances, compulsion was exercised on the Jews at the behest of the Church by the reigning authorities, as reflected, for example, in overt notice of the papal bull of 1278 in Peter III's order of 1279.[28] Where the secular authorities failed to lend their support, the program of compulsory sermons could not be realized. These authorities were not always models of consistency in their support. Thus, for example, King James I of Aragon, in the wake of the Barcelona confrontation, issued two edicts supporting the new preaching campaign. The first, dated August 26, 1263, was addressed to royal officialdom and simply repeated the provision of the king's earlier legislation of 1242, ordering his royal officials to enforce Jewish and Muslim attendance at sermons preached by Dominican friars.[29] Three days later, the king addressed the Jews of his realm directly, mentioning Friar Paul Christian explicitly as the key figure in the missionizing effort and spelling out more fully some details of the new preaching campaign.

We firmly command and order you that, when our beloved Friar Paul Christian, of the Order of Preaching Brethren, whom we send to you in order to exhibit the path of salvation, comes to you in your synagogues or your homes or other locales, for the proper purpose of preaching the word of God or of disputing or of conferring with you concerning sacred scriptures, in public or in private or in personal conversation, together or separately, you must come to him and listen gently and favorably and humbly and reverently and without calumny and subterfuge answer his

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questions concerning faith and sacred scriptures, according to your knowledge. Your books—which he will need for showing you the truth—you must present to him.[30]

Interestingly, the Jews were to pay for the expenses incurred by Friar Paul and deduct the sum paid from their regular taxes, in effect, making the king responsible for them. On the next day, however, the king seems to have reversed himself in a decree addressed once more to royal officialdom.

We order you that you not compel nor permit to be compelled the Jews of our cities, towns, and locales of our rule nor their wives or their children to exit to any place outside the Jewish quarter for the purpose of hearing a sermon of any of the Preaching Friars. Rather, if any friar of the Preaching Friars wishes to

enter their Jewish quarter or their synagogues and there to preach to them, they shall hear him if they wish. For this we have conceded to those Jews, that they not be required to go outside of their Jewish quarter for the purpose of hearing the sermon of anyone nor be required by force to hear a sermon anywhere. This we concede to them despite any document conceded by us to the contrary to the Preaching Friars.[31]

Precisely what transpired to alter royal support is not known. This complex case does indicate the potential for a shift in position on the part of the authorities and the critical impact of such shifts. In general, however, an increasing number of rulers in western Christendom began to back the ecclesiastical program of forced sermons during the middle decades of the thirteenth century.

A number of questions must be raised with regard to this evidence for compulsory sermons during the 1240s, 1250s, and 1260s. The first two concern the physical site and the Christian presence at the sermons. Since these issues were intimately linked, I shall treat them in tandem. Looking back over the incidents of conversionist preaching, we note the following locales: (1) major centers of secular authority, for example, the royal palaces in Barcelona and Paris; (2) major ecclesiastical institutions, for example, a large monastery in Barcelona and the Dominican priory in Paris; and (3) Jewish houses of worship, for example, the synagogues of Narbonne, Gerona, Barcelona, and a large number of Aragonese cities reflected in the royal edicts of 1279. In a number of instances, large retinues of Christians are mentioned (e.g. in Narbonne, Barcelona, Paris, and again the locales reflected in

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the Aragonese documentation of 1279). The specifics of these circumstances were of utmost importance to the Jews. Part of the impact of the compulsory sermon was psychological, stemming from the sense of powerlessness on the part of the Jewish auditors. An overwhelming setting certainly augmented this psychological impact. This is clearly reflected in a Hebrew report of a forced sermon delivered in Paris.

Know that each day we were over a thousand souls in the royal court or in the courtyard of the Dominicans, pelted with stones. Praise to the Lord, not one of us turned to the religion of vanity and lies.[32]

Here we see both the pressure of a Christian as opposed to a Jewish setting and the harassment of a large Christian audience. Given the alternative of hearing a Christian preacher outside their own community or within, the Jews surely preferred to host the preacher in their own setting. This is reflected in the pro-Jewish edict of James I of Aragon cited above. Moreover, it was of course in the Jewish interest to be confronted with as small a Christian contingent as possible. From the Jewish perspective, the less impressive the Christian presence, the better. The royal edicts of Peter III indicate some of the specifics of Christian harassment that went well beyond mere physical presence. There is reference to intimidating

behavior, about which the Jews obviously lodged complaint. The result was a series of royal letters upholding the Jewish complaints and strictly limiting the number of Christian auditors allowed at the missionizing sermons.

The question of language utilized in this preaching is an intriguing one. While the records of these sermons have come down to us only in Latin or Hebrew, it is impossible to envision such proceedings in either language. Latin would certainly not have provided a vehicle for reaching large numbers of Jews effectively. While some of the preachers, perhaps Friar Paul Christian among them, might have known enough Hebrew to address an audience in that language, others, like Friar Raymond of Penyafort or King James I of Aragon, would not have been so equipped. Moreover, avid following of the proceedings by Christian observers would not have been possible had they taken place in Hebrew. It is thus fairly obvious that the missionizing sermons and most of the Jewish responses were in the local vernacular. While this is plausible, it does leave one problem, and that is the pan-European activity of a preacher like Friar Paul Christian. How was it possible for him to preach to Jewish audiences in so many dif-

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ferent areas of Europe, using the local vernacular? No ready answer is available, other than to suggest that language proficiency was an integral part of the equipment of such professional preachers.

Thus, during the 1240s, the intense new atmosphere of Christian Europe—suffused with a deep-seated commitment to controlling patterns of thought among Christians, to limiting potentially harmful self-expression on the part of Christendom's non-Christian guests, and to spreading Christian truth among the infidels—created a powerful new tool for propagating Christian teaching among nonbelievers within the orbit of Christian society. A militant Church sought, and often received, the support of the secular overlords of the Muslims and Jews in forcing them to hear Christianity's message delivered by trained, learned, and eloquent preachers. Forcing physical presence at such conversionist sermons and debates constituted a first step in confronting these non-Christians with Christian truth. More crucial was the content of the message delivered, and it is to this key element in the new campaign that we must now turn our attention.

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## 4—

### Intensification of Prior Argumentation

The argumentation delivered through the new techniques of forced sermon and forced debate was firmly rooted in the pre-thirteenth-century legacy. In part, old lines of argumentation were pursued more intensely; in part, there were true innovations, yet even here there are discernible links to the past.

An unusually rich collection of polemical materials serve as our major source for the traditional argumentation directed at mid-thirteenth-century Jewry. This collection of Jewish materials, the Milhemet[\*]Mizvah[\*] of Rabbi Meir ben Simon of Narbonne, has the virtue of presenting to us both Christian thrusts, as perceived by the Jews, and Jewish responses. It affords direct insight into the new missionizing efforts as seen by the Jewish targets of these efforts and provides as well a sense of the lines of Jewish reaction.[1]

Because of the recurrent use to which this text will be put, a few brief remarks are in order. Rabbi Meir ben Simon is known for a series of works and was obviously a leading figure in mid-thirteenth-century southern French Jewry. His Milhemet Mizvah is a lengthy, rich, and sprawling work of more than two hundred fifty folio pages. The author divides the work into five major segments. Unfortunately, the opening pages of the first segment are lost, and we are therefore deprived of his introductory statement to the work in its entirety and to Part I specifically. We are forced to make our own assessment of the unifying concern in Part I of his opus. Despite the diversity of the component elements in this section of the work—a rambling literary debate between a Christian and a Jew, two sermons ostensibly delivered by the author, the record of a lengthy discussion between the author and the archbishop of Narbonne on the issue of Jewish moneylending, and the text of a letter drafted for submission to the French king—

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we are justified, I believe, in seeing this collection of materials as relating essentially to Christian-Jewish argumentation of the middle decades of the thirteenth century.[2]

Identification of the essential thrust of Part I in this fashion is supported by the author's explicit introduction to Part II.

Part II, which I have composed so that one may find in it, in abbreviated fashion, the responses which were in Part I, in the sermons.[3]

Part II is in fact a more carefully constructed statement of Christian-Jewish disagreement, in which the issues addressed in the various sections of Part I are treated in more organized fashion.[4] Part III consists of analysis of biblical verses that deal with the promise of redemption.[5] Parts IV and V are essentially addressed to internal issues within the Jewish community, although certain segments of Part IV are still of great value for our inquiry.[6]

To return to our immediate concern, the materials collected in the Milhemet[\*]Mizvah[\*] show us continued Jewish sensitivity to old-style Christian exegesis of key biblical verses. The most recurrent of the Christian arguments, and the most timeworn as well, was the claim that Jesus as Messiah, Savior, and Deity was either directly predicted or at least clearly foreshadowed in the Scriptures that the Jews themselves hold sacred. Christian spokesmen adduce verses from the Book of Daniel and argue that they foretell the advent of Jesus. In addition, a series of items such as the statement "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," the strife between Cain and Abel, the copper serpent, and the splitting of the Red Sea and the Jordan River are seen as heralding the role Jesus and Christianity were to play in cosmic history. The most extended and forceful statement of this view is presented in the following thrust of the priest:

The priest asked and said that he is surprised at us. The prophets prophesied concerning the coming of the Messiah and ascribed to him important characteristics which were then realized in Jesus. He was poor and rode on a donkey; he was the son of a virgin; he was from the seed of Jesse; many of the wonders which the prophets depicted he did. Since he did all this and since all these characteristics were apparent in him, you must surely accept him, in accordance with the commandment of God given through the prophets. As a parallel to this, if the pope sends his letter and indicates that he will dispatch a certain man with specific characteristics and that this man must be accepted as though he were the pope himself, then, when that man with those characteristics does come, we must all

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accept him and do his bidding. If we refuse, we would be considered rebellious.[7]

There is nothing original in this claim; indeed, it is the oldest strand in Christian argumentation against the Jews.

Our sense of ongoing Christian biblical exegesis and its central role in Christian argumentation aimed at the Jews is reinforced by the fact that two major northern European collections of Jewish counterexegesis date from the middle and closing decades of the thirteenth century. The Sefer Yosef ha-Mekane (The Book of Joseph the Zealous)[8] and the Sefer Nizahon[\*]Yashan (The Former Book of Polemics)[9] both move through the books of the Bible, isolating verses that had been interpreted Christologically and attacking such interpretations. Composition and dissemination of such works in the mid-thirteenth century buttress

our sense that biblically grounded Christian argumentation was still very much in evidence and that Jewish leaders felt it useful and important to provide their followers with counterexegesis.

Somewhat better known is the considerable effort to prove the truth of Christianity in purely rational terms. While such argumentation is not new to the thirteenth century, it is carried to its supreme level by Aquinas's *Summa contra gentiles*. Embracing from the outset the goal of proving Christian truth to all and refuting the errors of all nonbelievers, Aquinas acknowledges that, in such an enterprise, certain traditional lines of Christian argumentation must be eschewed. Particularly striking is the necessity for abandoning, for the sake of this particular effort, reliance on revealed truth, "because some of them [the nonbelievers], like the Mohammedans and the pagans, do not agree with us as to the authority of any Scriptures whereby they may be convinced, in the same way that we are able to dispute with the Jews by means of the Old Testament and with heretics by means of the New." The consequence of this abandonment of proof from the Scriptures is straightforward: "Wherefore it is necessary to have recourse to natural reason, to which all are compelled to assent."<sup>[10]</sup> Aquinas is quick to point out the limitations associated with this approach, but such limitations did not deter him from attempting and completing a massive work designed for use with those nonbelievers who can be approached only through the universally accessible avenue of rational argumentation. The grandeur of the construction he created is beyond doubt. It should be noted, nonetheless, that this approach, with all the advantages of its universality, suffered at least one

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major disadvantage, that is, the highly technical style of its presentation. It is impossible to conceive of a broad missionizing effort based on a rigorous presentation of philosophic issues. Too few listeners—Jewish or otherwise—were in a position to understand its subtleties. What happened more often was the use of a watered down, popularly oriented philosophic position, which could be rebutted or rejected without great difficulty. Given the availability of a scriptural base for missionizing among the Jews, it is not surprising that argumentation drawn from philosophic considerations was accorded distinctly secondary status.

Nonetheless, there is firm evidence for some use of this line of argumentation against the Jews during the middle decades of the thirteenth century. One clear-cut instance is reflected in Nahmanides' report of the aftermath of the Barcelona disputation. According to Rabbi Moses, he remained in Barcelona for a number of days so that he could be present in the synagogue there for an anticipated additional missionizing effort. In fact, two major sermons were preached to the Jews, one by the king, arguing for Jesus' fulfillment of messianic predictions (in all likelihood along traditional exegetical lines), and one by Friar Raymond of Penyafort, arguing for the doctrine of the Trinity. Nahmanides' terse report indicates that Friar Raymond "preached with regard to the trinity, saying that it represents wisdom, will, and power. He further said in the synagogue: 'Indeed the rabbi [Nahmanides] acknowledged this in Gerona, according to Friar Paul.'<sup>[11]</sup> While there is much in this brief account that requires further elaboration, it seems clear that this is

evidence of two presentations—one in Gerona and one in Barcelona—in which Christian spokesmen attempted to argue the basic rationality of Christian doctrine.

The line of argumentation that suggested on empirical grounds the moral and ethical superiority of Christianity and the debased standards of Judaism was also very much in evidence during this period. Again, the primary focus of this attack seems to have been Jewish moneylending. To be sure, much of the thrust and parry in the Milhemet[\*]Mizvah[\*] regarding Jewish moneylending involved Christian rationalizations for new antiusury legislation and Jewish objections to these new statutes.[12] One senses in addition, however, a broader thrust, with the Christian disputants often claiming that inferior Jewish moral standards are reflected in Jewish moneylending. Like the arguments from rational premises, this line of attack was present but not prevalent.

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Along with traditional biblical exegesis, a second set of arguments utilized widely during the middle decades of the thirteenth century revolved about the empirically observed material superiority of Christendom and the abject and seemingly hopeless position of the Jews. This approach appears very prominently in the Milhemet[\*]Mizvah[\*], reflecting the reality of its widespread use by the Christian side during this period. This thrust is central, for example, in the only substantive comment made by the fictional Christian sage in Part II and the note on which this section opens.

A Christian sage asked a Jewish sage: "Why do you not leave the Jewish faith? Indeed you see that the Jews have been in exile for a long time and day by day decline. You see, concerning the Christian faith, that the Christians become more exalted day by day and that their success had been notable for a long time. You would live among us in great honor and high status, instead of living, as you now do, in exile, degradation, shame, and calumny."[13]

This is obviously intended as more than an argument from expediency: leave a wretched status for more appealing circumstances. Implied is the assertion that the successes of Christianity and the suffering of the Jews are in fact a reflection of theological truth, with God dispensing success to those who are correct in their faith and actions and misery to those in error.

The nexus between material success and theological truth is indicated explicitly in the dialogue in Part I.

The priest said that, from the fact that we live in exile and degradation under their [Christian] domination and have remained so for such a long time, we must conclude that their faith is more correct and better than our faith.[14]

A similar point is made later in the dialogue, with specific reference to biblical injunction.

The priest asked: "Why do you transgress the commandment of the Torah, in which it is said: 'Follow the multitude in judgment'? [15] Indeed you should follow us in the faith of Jesus, for we outnumber you." [16]

While there is a tongue-in-cheek quality to this contention, the basic notion that the great material success of Christendom reflects the fundamental truth of the Christian faith was taken quite seriously. The clearest index of its seriousness is the fact that, as we shall see, Jewish authors went to great lengths to combat this argument.

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This intensified utilization of old argumentation was met, from the Jewish side, with a set of responses that had been fully elaborated during the preceding centuries. In all cases, the Jewish response was two-fold, arguing against the Christian claim, on the one hand, and attacking Christianity itself, on the other. Thus, for example, the Sefer Yosef ha-Mekane and the Sefer Nizahon[\*]Yashan both rebut Christian claims based on biblical exegesis and then launch an attack on the Christian Scriptures as well.

The same duality in treatment of standard Christian claims drawn from biblical exegesis is found in the Milhemet[\*]Mizvah[\*]. The rabbi, in the dialogue, combats forcefully every bit of Christian exegesis presented by his opponent. Prophecies alleged to point to Jesus are interpreted so as to avoid all such references; incidents seen as foreshadowing Jesus are understood in a different light. Occasionally, the give-and-take includes humor:

The priest said that the splitting of the Red Sea and the Jordan was a hint of baptism, since the waters stood in a single heap to their left and to their right. The rabbi said: "If they would have crossed in the water up to their thighs or their knees or even less, it would have been possible to argue thus. But since they crossed over on dry land, it is a proof in the opposite direction. God caused them to cross over on dry land so that they might not be saved by water and so that they would recognize that they achieved salvation through the negation of the waters. A further proof of the same lies in the fact that, after they crossed the Jordan, God commanded and said: 'Proceed with a second circumcision of the Israelites.[17] Thus he subsequently commanded concerning circumcision, to teach that they were not absolved of circumcision by virtue of crossing the Jordan." [18]

These specific exegetical thrusts are often banal and only occasionally interesting. The response of the Milhemet Mizvah to the argument that Jesus represented fulfillment of biblical prophecy runs far deeper, however. The author took the claim seriously and developed a number of lines of argumentation beyond the interpretation and reinterpretation of specific biblical verses and stories. The first of these lines—and

perhaps the most interesting—is a quasi-historical attack. Rabbi Meir contends that the clearest refutation of Christian claims associated with Jesus is the reaction of first-century Palestinian Jewry. This argument is presented at a number of points, most fully in the latter segments of the second sermon preserved in Part I. After making yet another case for the eventual salvation of the Jews, Rabbi Meir

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indicates "why we should not accept belief in their faith in Jesus and in their teachings and laws."<sup>[19]</sup> The third through seventh of these anti-Christian statements are as follows:

Thirdly, because the Pharisees condemned him, according to that which is written in the Gospels. It is well known that, at that time, the Pharisees were wiser and more scrupulous in their concerns for the commandments than the rest of the Jewish populace, just as the priests, the tonsured, and the Dominicans and Franciscans are today considered among the Christians. In the case of anyone whom they now judge a heretic or disbeliever, the barons must execute their judgment.

Fourthly, because the greatest of the priests and high priests, called in their books Caiaphas, condemned him. It is written in the Torah: "If a case is too baffling for you to decide, be it a controversy over homicide, civil law, or assault—matters of dispute in your courts—you shall promptly repair to the place which the Lord your God has chosen and appear before the levitical priests or the magistrate in charge at the time and present your problem. When they have announced to you the verdict in the case, you shall carry out the verdict that is announced to you from that place which the Lord chose, observing scrupulously all their instructions to you." It further says: "Should a man act presumptuously and disregard the priest charged with serving there the Lord your God or the magistrate, that man shall die . . ."<sup>[20]</sup> Thus we must not swerve from the command of these high priests, and anyone who transgresses their injunctions is deserving of death.

Fifthly, because the entire people agreed in condemning him to crucifixion. If it were true that he was beneficial in healing their sick and restoring sight to their blind and hearing to their deaf and in reviving their dead, then all the people would not have agreed unanimously to have him killed. But indeed it says in their Gospels that, when the procurator Pilate said: "What shall I do with Jesus?", then all the people said: "Let him be crucified." Who can believe that someone who brought only great benefits and lightened the burden of the commandments would be condemned to death, unless the people recognized unfailingly that his deeds were performed through magic and that his words were not proper and true. . .

Sixthly, because he was their kinsman and, according to Christian testimony, of royal lineage. If the Jews had done this [condemnation of an accused] to a stranger, we should believe them; how much more so to a kinsman. For it is natural that a man attempts to prove the innocence of his kinsmen and declines to

see their guilt, unless the matter is simple and obvious. Thus if Jesus's guilt was not obvious, they would not have condemned him . . .

Seventh, because, if it had been as Jesus claimed, all the Jews would have felt pride and exultation and self-esteem more than any other

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people—if it had been true that God had taken on flesh in the womb of a Jewish woman and that she gave birth immaculately and that he performed many signs and wonders and was exceedingly wise. . . . But behold, they did the opposite and transformed his glory into shame, for truly it is embarrassing and shameful for the members of a clan when one of them misbehaves and is exceedingly wicked.<sup>1</sup> Therefore those Jews must be believed when they testify negatively against Jesus. It is well known that the confession of a litigant is superior to a hundred witnesses.[21]

This is an important line of anti-Christian argumentation in the Milhemet[\*]Mizvah[\*]. The author is willing to acknowledge the veracity of the Gospel accounts of the historical rejection and condemnation of Jesus by the Jews. Rather than a heinous sin, this is viewed by Rabbi Meir as decisive proof of the falsity of the faith based on the life and experience of Jesus. His argumentation is explicit and detailed. He isolates three responsible parties to this condemnation: (1) the priesthood, the source of whose religious authority can be traced to biblical injunction; (2) the Pharisees, whose authority lay in their acknowledged religious scrupulousness; and (3) the totality of the Jewish people, whose wisdom resided in its unanimous rejection of Jesus. All three of these crucial groups agreed in a negative assessment of Jesus, despite a number of psychological predispositions that might have led to an acceptance of his claims.

One of the messianic attributes singled out by the priest in the dialogue was the wonders and signs performed by Jesus, again seen as fulfilling prior prophecy. This, too, was an old line of Christian argumentation, one with which the author of the Milhemet Mizvah was concerned. It was his view that Jesus never performed truly miraculous deeds, such as had been accomplished by great figures in earlier Israelite history. This assertion is found next among the anti-Christian arguments cited.

Eighth, because he never performed a sublime wonder. It is as the sage said: "Heaven forbid that the Holy One, blessed be he, cause the sun to stand still for those who transgress his will."<sup>[22]</sup> Even according to them [the Christians], of all the wonders which he performed, there were no great wonders like that of the magicians of Egypt, who transformed their rods into serpents, which meant that a living soul entered the rods, which were not of the composition or structure to receive a living soul. But a corpse [into which Jesus was supposed to have infused life], its limbs and body have already held a soul. Thus, if a soul returns to this body, this is not such a great wonder. . . .

Twelfth. It is known that his wonders, which were written in the Gospels and which included curing the ill and similar matters, were done so that people would believe in him. Since this is so, he should have done them in a way which would permit no doubt in any wise and pious man's mind concerning his prophecy and divinity. If you say that he performed these deeds in a doubtful fashion so that some [of the Jews] would not believe in him and would kill him, then why should they be punished for this? They behaved properly, since his wonders were not of the sort which are beyond doubt. . . . Moreover, if it is true that, after he had been killed and buried, he went up to heaven and saved the souls of the righteous from Satan, why did he not ascend before multitudes? He should have gathered together all who had denied his divinity and had condemned him to death, saying: "Now behold that you have erred greatly," and should have ascended before them to heaven. Moreover, since you say that he was revealed to his twelve disciples in the Galilee, he should have done this publicly, so that the entire world would believe in him and not be damned.[23]

As always, Rabbi Meir is verbose. There are two basic points: (1) the miracles attributed to Jesus are, on an "objective" scale, not terribly impressive, for the Bible records numerous instances of far more impressive miraculous occurrences; and (2) Jesus' miracles were conspicuously unsuccessful in achieving what they should have, that is, recognition of his claims by his contemporaries. His own ambivalent attitude toward wonders, recorded in the Gospels and known to Rabbi Meir, is seen as a sign of weakness. The more significant sign of weakness was simply the failure to produce miracles on a scale that would have necessitated widespread assent to his claims. Once again, the Jewish polemicist argues that Jesus failed to fulfill those criteria associated with the Messiah.

Rabbi Meir takes the negative reaction of Jesus' Jewish contemporaries as one indicator of the nullity of Christian claims and the weakness of his miraculous deeds as another. Quite clearly, however, the most telling argument, for him, is the broader failure to usher in the type of era associated with the biblical imagery of the Messiah. Thus, when the priest in the dialogue makes the fundamental claim that the Messiah has already appeared, the rabbi makes the following rejoinder:

Concerning the Messiah there are three major developments which the prophets foretold. They are: that the Messiah will rule throughout the world, as is written: "His rule shall extend from sea to sea and from

ocean to land's end." [24] It is further written: "He shall rule from sea to sea." [25] And it is said in Isaiah: "For the nation or the kingdom that does not serve you will perish." [26] This has not yet happened to the Christians or to the Muslims or to any other people. Secondly, all the world will believe in God, may he be blessed, as is written: "For then I will make the peoples pure of speech, so that they all invoke the Lord by name and serve him with one accord." [27] This also has not yet transpired. . . . Thirdly, there will be peace, as is written in Isaiah: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks;

nation shall not take up sword against nation; they shall never again know war."<sup>[28]</sup> It is further said: "He shall establish peace among the nations."<sup>[29]</sup> But behold each day war proliferates between the pope and the prince who is the son of the emperor, and likewise between the Muslims and the Christians.<sup>[30]</sup>

After the priest challenges aspects of this statement and is rebutted by the rabbi, the latter "adds further proof from the desolation of the land and of the enemy who dwells in it."<sup>[31]</sup> This is not fully adumbrated in the dialogue but is further explicated in the continuation to the second sermon. These observations must of course be seen against the backdrop of ongoing mid-thirteenth-century strife in the Holy Land. Once again, Rabbi Meir is fully attuned to contemporary realities.

Behold the prophets have indicated for us many future events that were intended to take place while we were in exile and that were intended to take place during the subsequent time of redemption.

The first testimony is that God promised that he would turn the hearts of all, "so that they all invoke the Lord by name and serve him with one accord"<sup>[32]</sup> during the days of the Messiah, and this has not yet happened. Secondly and thirdly, it is written in the Torah, in the admonitions of punishment applicable to the Jews in exile: "I will make the land desolate, so that your enemies who settle in it will be appalled by it."<sup>[33]</sup> Behold two future events are written in this verse. The first is the desolation of the enemies living in it. Indeed every day we see that both these predictions are fulfilled. . . . It is well known among us and obvious every day that, even were all the kings—the kingdom of Christendom and of Islam and of other faiths—to make peace and to rebuild the Temple and to inhabit Jerusalem, they would not be capable of so doing. God would sow confusion among them, so that nothing would materialize. There is no king who could rebuild Jerusalem and repopulate it even briefly in the manner in which it stood under our ancestors' rule for many years. Since we see that God, who is truth, has fulfilled this prediction concerning our exile, we must certainly believe that, at the proper time, he will fulfill for

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us what he promised concerning the time of salvation, for his capacity for goodness exceeds his capacity for punishment.<sup>[34]</sup>

In sum, from many points of view, the author of the Milhemet[\*]Mizvah[\*] (and many other Jewish spokesmen as well) rejected contemporary—and age-old—Christian claims that Jesus appeared as the fulfillment of messianic predictions from within Israelite tradition itself. The rebuttals in the Milhemet Mizvah are drawn from four directions: (1) disagreement with specific instances of Christian exegesis; (2) the rejection of Jesus by his Jewish contemporaries, with the notion that they should have been in the best possible position to weigh such claims; (3) the inadequacy of the miracles reportedly produced by him; and (4) the failure of the prophetically predicted general changes in the world order to materialize in the wake of his appearance.

With regard to the issue of rationality, Jewish spokesmen insisted that their faith was highly rational and that it was Christianity that was beset with irrationality. Let us note the defense of Jewish rationality presented by the author of the Milhemet Mizvah .

Behold I see that the Torah of Moses, to which I adhere and my ancestors adhered, is true and perfect, and in its practices [one finds] great goodness and pleasure, as is written: "Its ways are ways of pleasantness and all its paths are peace."<sup>[35]</sup>

It teaches a true faith and the unity of the Creator, may he be blessed: that he created all the superior and inferior beings, as is written: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth";<sup>[36]</sup> that he observes all and knows the deeds, words, and thoughts of man; that he recompenses every man according to his behavior, whether good or bad, sometimes in natural ways and sometimes in supernatural ways. . . All of this is done fairly, justly, graciously, and mercifully. . . . He accepts those who truly repent, as is written: "He forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin."<sup>[37]</sup> But he punishes the wicked who stand firm in their rebellion and those children who continue in the paths of their [errant] fathers. If it seems that there is a wicked man who flourishes or a righteous man who suffers, all this is through the decree of his wisdom, for the benefit of the man who obeys and for the punishment of the rebel. . . . Indeed, in sum, each person will receive, either in this world or in the world to come, which is the world of recompense, the reward which is appropriate for him. . . . For all these matters there are many stories and verses in the Torah and in the Prophets. True wisdom also teaches them, for it is unthinkable to attribute to the Creator of all, who is infinite in wisdom and power, that he

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makes the actions of this world meaningless and pointless, and even more unthinkable that he makes them wicked, cruel, and vicious.<sup>[38]</sup>

In contrast, the Jewish polemicist sees Christianity as highly irrational. Key doctrines singled out for scorn are Incarnation and Trinity, with heavy emphasis on the former. One instance of the recurrent criticism of the doctrine of Incarnation is found in the continuation of the second of the author's recorded sermons, among his fifteen allegations against Christianity.

Eleventh, all physical characteristics were to be found in his body. He was small at birth, like all infants. There was no difference between him and other children. He was enclosed for nine months in a vessel of blood and there developed. When he was born, he passed through the birth canal and had to be washed. He had to nurse, cried, played, slept, awoke, ate, drank, and was hungry—he and his disciples—, defecated, urinated, and flatulated. But behold, we find with Moses, peace unto him, that he tarried forty days and forty nights, not eating bread or drinking water when he was on the mountain and the spirit of

God was upon him. How much more should we believe that he was not in need of elimination and other objectionable bodily functions. Concerning Jesus, if it were true that divinity was within him, why was it necessary for him to eat and drink and perform other bodily functions. Moreover, he slept, but behold it is written: "The Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps."<sup>[39]</sup> Moreover, they were forced to smuggle him to Egypt, out of fear of the king, and he remained there until he matured, because of fear of the king. He was likewise hidden many times, even after he matured and returned to the Land of Israel. . . Many times he was shocked and frightened out of fear of death. He also prayed to the Creator to remove the cup of death, but his prayers were not accepted. He would also conceal and deny out of fear. . . [40]

In penning such criticism of the doctrine of Incarnation, Rabbi Meir was, of course, in the mainstream of medieval Jewish polemics.

Jewish polemicists approached the issue of empirically observable moral and social standards with similar convictions of Jewish superiority and Christian inferiority. Rabbi Meir argues vigorously against Christian denigration of the Jews for their moneylending. He suggests consistently that there are no moral or religious prohibitions associated with such practices. Rather, Judaism, according to him, is a religion of elevated human values.

I likewise see that the commandments of the Torah are good and proper, useful for man and society and the perfection of the soul, so that it be

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bound up in the bond of life forever. For among the commandments of the Torah is [the commandment] to observe the sabbath and festivals, so that man be relieved of the burdens of the world and consider the wonders of the Creator and read the stories of the Torah and Prophets and recognize from them that the Rock, may he be blessed, created all and watches all and directs all, as we have explained. Thus man accepts upon himself love of God and fear of God with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might. Also among the commandments of the Torah are [the commandments] to honor parents, teachers, and elders; to love one's neighbors; to refrain from vengeance, spite, and hatred; to deal properly with an enemy; to load and unload with him; to return his lost article; to give to the poor that which they lack. Also among the commandments of the Torah are [the commandments] to refrain from illicit sexual relations, from forbidden foods, and from impure objects. In sum, when the wise man examines the commandments, he will find that they promote the welfare of the body, the welfare of society, and the perfection of the soul.[41]

In contrast, Christianity is, according to Rabbi Meir, deeply flawed by moral and ethical shortcomings. Note, for example, the following criticism of the central Christian sacrament of baptism.

You further said that even the sinners among you will not be saved for the world to come, unless they are baptized, even though they belong to the Christian faith. You intended to build a case against me, but you have instead been destructive [to your own cause]. You sought to buttress your claims, but I see through reason that you have smashed them like earthen vessels. Now you tell me how you can believe in such an injustice on the part of the Creator. Consider that two children were born today—one the child of a poor Christian man and a poor Christian woman, both righteous and faithful according to your religion. The father died prior to the birth of the child and his mother died during childbirth. Thus the child remained [alone] and neighbors nursed him graciously and piously, but he died before he was baptized. The other child was the son of a wealthy but wicked man. Because of his wealth, he found someone who baptized him. Subsequently both children died on the same day. Now tell me—what was the sin of the child of the poor man, who could not find someone to baptize him because of his poverty, so that he does not enter into paradise even though he is righteous? And what was the merit of the child of the wealthy and wicked man, so that he does enter paradise, because he was baptized as a result of his wealth? Is there favoritism in paradise toward the wealthy and the wicked, and is there prejudice against the oppressed poor? If I do not wish to accept such belief, because I see in it grave injustice, God will judge me favorably and will condemn those who attribute to him wickedness and injustice. "Far be it from God that

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he should do wickedness, and from the Almighty that he should commit iniquity."<sup>[42]</sup>

This is a criticism that was widespread within Christendom itself all through the Middle Ages. It is particularly striking to find such a criticism of Christianity leveled by a Jew, since the medieval Christian image of the Jew stressed heavily the latter's physical fulfillment of a panoply of laws, without concern for their spiritual substance. Precisely this charge is made by the author of the Milhemet[\*] Mizvah[\*] in his continuation of the discussion concerning baptism. He points to the centrality of the spiritual content of physical religious acts, notes the essentially physical nature of many key Christian practices, and calls for Christians to be consistent and fulfill other biblically enjoined physical commandments—in the proper spiritual sense, of course.<sup>[43]</sup>

The Christian practice of confession likewise elicits scorn from Rabbi Meir. In his catalog of critiques that forms the bulk of Part II of the collection, he opens with the following:

After all this [the positive description of Judaism], I shall detail for you all that I observe in the behavior and belief of Christians that is not agreeable to me. I shall commence with the matter of confession, which you call "poenitentia." Your practice is objectionable to me on two grounds. The first is that Christians confess to one set person, whom they call a chaplain, and indicate to him the sins which they commit. For this reason, on occasion, the sinner does not disclose all sins out of embarrassment and is thus damned,

according to their belief. Moreover, on occasion, that man whom they call a chaplain learns from the one who confesses and imitates him. . . .

Secondly, women confess to this man and declare to him their infidelity, if she sinned with another man in place of her husband. The passion of the confessor may overcome him and he likewise will sin with her and will frequent her. For this reason, he will sin with many women from the town or citadel, and they will bear him children, but the matter will not be known. As a result, a brother may marry his sister or his aunt. . . . According to their faith, they should have ordered that a woman confess only before an old man seventy years old or more, unless the women themselves are very old and known to be proper.[44]

Indeed, the Jewish polemicist's critique of patterns of Christian behavior extends beyond the sphere of religious practice into the general realm of societal norms. He claims, in effect, that the society that is rooted in Christian doctrine is, in a broad sense, cruel and amoral. While the author's concern is to buttress his Jewish readers' commit-

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ment to their faith, his critical reflections on medieval Christendom have an independent interest for the modern social historian. They represent an unusual minority perspective on the shortcomings of medieval Christian society. The criticism of Christianity in Part II continues as follows:

Thirdly, they are lax in regard to sexual prohibitions, such as the prohibition of a married woman or of a relative, such as one's sister, mother, daughter, mother-in-law, or aunt. They then go off to shrines near and far and say that they will spend a night there and offer a candle or a coin and thus the sin will be forgiven, even though it is a serious sin worthy of divine punishment through premature death or capital punishment. . . .

Fifthly, anyone who is an extortionist and a criminal is given an opportunity to extort and to rob. He produces a seal from the head of the kingdom against another, forcing him upon threat of excommunication to travel two days journey from his home and to be judged before a judge whom the plaintiff has chosen. [All this is done] in order that the defendant redeem himself by payment from the expenses of the journey and from the loss of funds occasioned by cessation of work or from fear of danger on the roads. . . .

Sixthly, it would be proper that the bishop and the governor establish a faithful and honest judge and scribe, along with police and messengers, so that all these take nothing from anyone. They would only take their wages from the town's governor or from the townsmen as a group. Thus, when the defendant pays the plaintiff the sum owed, the latter would lose nothing. Now, however, if the sum owed is two

shillings, he has expenses for the wages of the messengers who bring the defendant before the judge, and the scribes receive wages for writing down the charge and the response and the testimony of the witnesses. Thus the amount at issue does not remain; in fact sometimes there is not even half. It would be proper to return the sum of the obligation owed to the aggrieved and to punish the transgressor for all the expenses of the aggrieved. . . .

Seventh, they relax vows and withhold loan repayment by lengthening the period of repayment for those who have taken the cross and traverse the sea [to war] against the Muslims. They should instead warn that anyone who is sullied by sin not cross the sea until he correct that shortcoming.[45]

Again, the essential point is that the moral deficiencies of Christian society reflect, in a profound way, the fundamental infirmity of the religious vision on which that society rests.

The last traditional Christian argument, that derived from the readily observable contrast in the status of Christendom and the Jew-

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ish world, the former exalted and the latter oppressed, was powerfully presented by the Christian side and intensely resisted by the Jews. The author of the Milhemet[\*]Mizvah[\*] was deeply concerned with rebuttal of this argument and devotes much energy and ingenuity to assuring his coreligionists that contemporary realities are not what they seem to be and that Jewish status is not to be taken as proof of the rejection of the Jews or the nullity of Judaism. Two of the components of Part I of his compendium are, in fact, fully devoted to rebuttal of this line of Christian attack; these are the transcripts of two of the author's sermons.

Rabbi Meir responds in a number of ways to the challenge posed by Christian power and Jewish weakness. One line of defense is to mitigate the reality of Christian achievement. We have already noted the argument that, despite its acknowledged successes, Christendom has not fulfilled the high standards set for messianic times. Such promised features of the messianic advent as universal recognition of the true God and perfect peace among peoples are nowhere in evidence. On a less exalted and absolute scale, the author is well aware of the extent of Muslim power and sees that reality as yet another mitigation of Christian achievement. This is expressed in the dialogue in the following terms:

There is another clear proof for my claims. For behold the Muslims rule in portions of the world as do the Christians, and we are in exile under their control. Now the Christians acknowledge that the Muslims do not possess a true faith and that they will not be saved through their faith and that their souls will be

damned and cut off. Indeed it seems fitting to say that for this reason God sent us into exile among these two people, so that neither might have a claim against us in this regard.[46]

If Christians acknowledge that Muslim domination serves as no proof for the truth of Islam, then they must recognize that their own material achievements prove nothing. Once more, the message is aimed at Jewish readers who would fill in the list of subjugators of the Jews with additional names. They are thus encouraged to recall that no past subjugation had proved the truth of the religious vision of the subjugators, and neither would any present domination.

More important than challenging the Christian claim to truth based on material achievement and power was rebuttal of the allegation that the abject state of the Jews reflects the vacuity of Judaism. This contention is raised directly in the dialogue, eliciting the following strong reply from the rabbi:

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[It was foretold] that, if we transgressed the word of the Torah . . . , God would exile us from our land and disperse us among the nations, as is written: "And you I will scatter among the nations." [47] It is further said: "The Lord will bring a nation against you from afar." [48] It is also said: "They incensed me with no-gods, vexed me with their futilities; I shall incense them with a no-folk, vex them with a nation of fools." [49] It is hinted in Daniel that men of proper faith will be subjugated, as is written: "It cast down truth to the ground." [50] It is further said: "And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and some of the host and of the stars it cast down to the ground and trampled upon them." [51] Indeed this alludes to our holy Torah which is called truth . . . and to the Jewish people who have been compared to the stars of the sky. Thus you see that they have no proof from the greatness of their power and their domination over us that their faith is better than ours . . . Indeed the lengthiness of our exile is hinted in Daniel elsewhere.

Ultimately, however, we shall be saved, as is written: "Truth will spring up from the earth; justice will look down from heaven." [52] It is further said: "For instruction shall come forth from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." [53] It is further said: "For all of them, from the least of them to the greatest, shall know me." [54] It is also said: "For the land shall be filled with devotion to the Lord." [55] It is also said: "The Lord is a God of truth." [56] These are true prophecies which will not fail. It is further said: "To you nations shall come from the ends of the earth and say: 'Our fathers inherited utter delusions, things that are futile and worthless.' " [57] And it is said: "For then will I make the people pure of speech, so that they all invoke the Lord by name and serve him with full accord." [58]

Two elements in this passage are particularly noteworthy: (1) There is no challenge raised to the claim of degraded Jewish status. The author acknowledges the reality of Jewish subjugation. (2) The proof that this status is no reflection on the truth of Judaism is drawn exclusively from biblical prophecy. The essential

argument is that the contemporary reality of degraded Jewish status is part and parcel of the divine scheme fully predicted in the Scriptures. Prophetic writings foretold a period of degradation, such as that through which the Jews were living, and also unequivocally foretold eventual salvation, which would likewise come about. The efforts to reinforce this sense of ultimate redemption are extensive and reflect awareness of the potential damage that prolonged Jewish degradation might entail.

Both of the author's sermons are based on the same kind of argumentation. In the first of the sermons, the focus is fixed on a set of verses in the Song of Songs; in the second, there is emphasis on verses from the later chapters of Isaiah. In both cases, the author argues that

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Israel's suffering was foreordained; that it therefore cannot serve as a negation of the truth of the Jewish faith; and that it will eventually be replaced by a period of dignity and splendor. Let us conclude with a brief segment of the second sermon, which repeats many of these key themes.

The prophet said: "Fear not the insults of men, and be not dismayed at their jeers."<sup>[59]</sup> That is to say, pay no heed to the insults which they shall level against you, whether by words or by blows of their hands or feet. The prophet used the term enosh rather than adam or ish in order to hint that they will be punished for this and that the insulters and jeerers will receive their punishment. It further says: "For the moth shall eat them up like a garment; the worm shall eat them up like wool."<sup>[60]</sup> Now see and understand the parallel. For it is known that the moth is created from cloth and eats it and destroys it, just as does the worm in wool. The parallel has two aspects and both are true. In the first place, it comes to indicate that confusion will develop among them, so that they will destroy one another, as is written: "I will incite Egyptian against Egyptian."<sup>[61]</sup> Thus vengeance for the people of the Lord [the Jews] will be self-inflicted [by the Christians upon themselves]. . . . Secondly, the verse comes to indicate that, with the sword with which they come upon Israel, they will be killed, as David said: "Their swords will pierce their own hearts."<sup>[62]</sup> And it is said: "He has dug a pit and deepened it and will fall into the trap he made."<sup>[63]</sup> Likewise, with the claims which they raise against our faith, we shall vanquish them. Thus God assured us through his prophet: "No weapon formed against you shall succeed, and every tongue that contends with you at law you shall defeat. Such is the lot of the servants of the Lord; such their triumph through me—declares the Lord."<sup>[64]</sup>

In sum, the new commitment to missionizing among the Jews, utilizing the new techniques of forced sermon and forced debate, often fell back on old and tested lines of Christian argumentation. The Jews were quite well prepared for these thrusts with traditional lines of defense. This, however, is far from the whole story. These same decades also produced strikingly innovative lines of argumentation, which necessitated new Jewish responses. This innovativeness is reflective again of the seriousness of purpose that animated the new missionizing of the mid-thirteenth century. While old arguments were occasionally utilized, there was a restless and unremitting search for claims that might be more effective. The key to

these new claims lay in a remarkable effort to penetrate the Jewish tradition and the Jewish psyche, seeking to construct arguments in the light of a fuller understanding of the Jewish mentality.

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### **The Innovative Argumentation**

As is generally the case for the Middle Ages, the innovative argumentation of the mid-thirteenth-century Christian missionizing effort among the Jews was strongly linked to the legacy of the past. It is, in fact, tempting to accept the medieval view and disavow any genuine innovation. Yet, as the materials are studied and evaluated, a sure sense of something new and different is inescapable.

The heart of this innovation lay in an unwillingness to remain comfortable with the earlier lines of argumentation and a desire to penetrate the Jewish community and its psyche. The commitment to addressing the Jews as they actually lived and thought is what distinguishes the new missionizing and its leaders. The key to this direct assault on the Jewish mentality lay in a growing Christian awareness of the highly developed postbiblical literature of the Jews, its importance to them, and some of its contents.[1] Given the idea that the most efficacious route to missionizing among the Jews lay in scriptural exegesis and given the new awareness of a Jewish tradition of exegesis that ran counter to that of the Church, a sensible procedure was to scrutinize in detail this Jewish exegetical tradition in the hope of neutralizing it or—even better—utilizing it. These important insights clearly reflect the enhanced seriousness of midcentury Christian missionizing. This effort was no longer satisfied with mounting arguments that Christian tradition had found meaningful but that Jews had consistently rejected; it was committed to a better understanding of the Jewish audience and a search for arguments carefully adapted to it.

Utilization of Jewish exegesis itself was a useful ploy from many perspectives. First of all, it promised a better impression on Jewish listeners than most of the earlier approaches. Moreover, beyond its intellectual advantages, it offered psychological benefits as well. The first of these was simply the impact of novelty on audiences long inured to standard and readily rebuffed argumentation; the second was

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the distress occasioned by Jewish awareness of Christian knowledge of rabbinic literature and utilization of it. Finally, this new approach offered significant tactical advantages as well. By utilizing Jewish exegesis of the Scriptures, the Christian missionizers in effect obviated any threat of genuine give-and-take, of an assault on Judaism that might turn into a counterattack on Christianity. By focusing on rabbinic exegesis, the new missionizing created the following options: either Jewish exegesis corroborated Christian claims—which would be a positive result from the Christian perspective—or it did not corroborate

Christian claims—a circumstance that would in no sense be harmful to Christian truth. Whereas arguments on biblical, philosophic, or empirical grounds could be turned against Christianity, use of rabbinic materials could never result in anti-Christian conclusions. For all these reasons, this innovative turn in missionizing argumentation had to be seen, from the Christian perspective, as a promising and foolproof approach.

Indeed, the notion of utilizing Jewish exegesis led inevitably in another direction. Once awareness of rabbinic literature surfaced, there was no reason to use only Jewish exegesis of the Scriptures; it was possible and sensible to marshal freestanding rabbinic dicta as well and to argue that they also reflect Christian truth. This is a still more innovative approach, which created a wholly new basis for Christian argumentation. In addition to claims drawn from the Bible (with Jewish exegesis), from reason, and from empirical observation, Christian missionizing could now also use arguments drawn from the independent religious literature of the Jews themselves. This new approach had all the advantages associated with utilization of Jewish exegesis. Indeed, the two sets of arguments are intimately related and represent for the Christian side a breakthrough of sorts and for the Jews a serious new challenge.

As we begin our investigation of this new line of missionizing argumentation, it must be borne in mind that such innovations do not appear full-blown. Inevitably, we should anticipate experimentation, trial and error, and increasing refinement of these valuable new missionizing tacks. A set of arguments advanced first in the 1240s and 1250s will require some time before assuming polished form. The same will be true for the Jewish responses. It will take the Jews of western Christendom time before they assess properly the seriousness of the new argumentation and develop a set of effective counterarguments.

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The Milbemet[\*] Mizvah[\*] shows a number of rudimentary references to Christian awareness of rabbinic literature and law. In most instances, these references are neutral; Jewish law is cited and questioned but not attacked in the violent and abusive manner of Nicholas Donin.

The priest asked: "Why do you not place purple thread on your fringes, as is written in your Torah: 'Let them attach a cord of blue to the fringe at each corner.' "[2]

The priest asked: "It is written in your Torah: 'From the day after the sabbath . . . you must count fifty days.' [3] Why do you go to great lengths to explain this verse and to remove it seemingly from its simple meaning, saying that there are only forty-nine days and that the fiftieth day is not included in the reckoning." [4]

The priest said: "What have you to say about that which is written in the Torah: 'He must be given forty lashes.'[5] But you delete one blow, thus the ritual of repentance is not complete."[6]

Indeed, in one interesting instance, knowledge of rabbinic sources is harnessed to a missionizing thrust.

The priest said: "Behold your sages have said that 'falsehood cannot stand.'[7] If so, then how has the faith of Jesus lasted so long, unless it is actually the truth."[8]

Although this is not a very penetrating thrust, it is early evidence of the new argumentation.

Another mid-thirteenth-century source gives us a better early sense of the new argumentation. Rabbi Isaac ben Yedaiah's Commentary on the Aggadot of the Talmud includes the following:

Now I shall indicate further explicitly and openly concerning their [the rabbis'] words that which I responded to one of the Christian sages with regard to the questions which he posed to me. [He asked me] and disputed with me as to why we remain obstinate concerning the King Messiah, who came, in their view, to lead the new faith that has been initiated for them. They argue strenuously through their [the rabbis'] words and all similar statements that they [the rabbis], of blessed memory, foresaw their faith and gave testimony that the Messiah had come and that he led them in the city of Rome, which is a great city devoted to their deity whom they worship. That fellow asked what else their [the rabbis'] intention was and what else they proposed to teach us when they said, concerning the Messiah, that he was created in their days and went to Rome,[9] if not that they foresaw that the Messiah came in their days and inno-

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vated for them a new religion and faith, the religion of the Christians. Thus in vain do we anticipate that another will come in his stead to extricate us from this lengthy exile, for we have fallen as a result of the sins of our ancestors and we shall not rise again.[10]

This is a primitive formulation of a case that will be made with increasing sophistication.

The evidence from Rabbi Meir ben Simon and Rabbi Isaac ben Yedaiah reflects the new approaches in a tentative fashion. It is obvious that the decisive figure in the early development of these two new lines of Christian argumentation was Friar Paul Christian. Born a Jew, he converted to Christianity, eventually joined the Dominican Order, played an extremely active role in a number of anti-Jewish programs during

the middle decades of the thirteenth century, and introduced major innovations in Christian missionizing argumentation. Because Friar Paul will play such a dominant role throughout this discussion, it seems wise to begin with a few brief remarks concerning this shadowy figure.[11]

It must be noted at the outset that we possess no single source that flows directly from the pen of Friar Paul; all evidence derives from observations about him and his activities made by fellow-Christians or—more frequently—by Jews ranged in opposition to him. These sources are rather extensive. They include (1) royal edicts supportive of his activities enacted by the kings of France and Aragon, along with a letter of papal concern written by Pope Clement IV;[12] (2) recurrent references to Friar Paul in Latin records of the period;[13] (3) a fascinating Hebrew letter ostensibly written to the friar by a Jew who was related to him and tried (clearly unsuccessfully) to convince him of the error of his ways;[14] (4) extensive Hebrew rebuttals of the missionizing argumentation of Friar Paul, the most important of which are the lengthy report of Rabbi Moses ben Nahman of the Barcelona confrontation of 1263 and Rabbi Mordechai ben Joseph's *Mahazik[\*]Emunah*;[15] and (5) a number of Hebrew reports of his activities.[16] The volume of this material alone suggests that Friar Paul was a man of considerable influence and significance. This conclusion is supported by his success in winning the support of the highest authorities of both church and state for his programs.

Friar Paul was born in southern France, probably in Montpellier, and in all likelihood was a scion of a prominent Jewish family. He undoubtedly studied in one or more of the major academies of the re-

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gion; he is identified in a fourteenth-century source as a student of Rabbi Eliezer of Tarrascon.[17] The circumstances of his conversion are unknown. Subsequent to this conversion, he became deeply immersed in activities related to his former fellow-Jews. Some of these involved efforts to impose on them the limitations that he—along with others at this time—felt to be mandatory; in these efforts, he operated along the lines of the slightly earlier apostate, Nicholas Donin. More innovative was his concern with missionizing among his former coreligionists, an endeavor in which he exhibited originality, turning the mid-thirteenth-century missionizing effort in creative new directions. More specifically, according to the letter of his relative, he occupied himself with five particular areas of anti-Jewish activity: (1) an assault on the Talmud, which is documented in other sources as well; (2) an attack on Jewish moneylending, undocumented elsewhere for Friar Paul but well known for this period; (3) an attack on the Jewish prayer service, again undocumented elsewhere for Friar Paul but common during this period; (4) missionizing among the Jews, which was his most significant endeavor; and (5) provoking the disinterring of Jewish corpses.[18] To this must be added involvement in the institution of the Jewish badge in a number of areas of western Christendom.[19] The range of these activities suggests that he saw himself, and was seen by others, as a general expert in Jewish affairs; his success in eliciting support from the highest authorities made him a very problematic figure for the Jews of this period.

Despite the wide range of Friar Paul's activities, it was his missionizing that was probably most significant; in any case, it is the activity directly of concern to us. Our earliest solid evidence for his proselytizing activities comes from the famed Barcelona disputation of 1263. However, at the outset of Nahmanides' report on this crucial confrontation, Rabbi Moses indicates that Friar Paul's use of the new lines of argumentation antedated 1263. In the preliminary sparring that seems to have preceded the actual discussion, Nahmanides notes prior missionizing efforts "in Provence and in many places."<sup>[20]</sup> The Barcelona confrontation was clearly not the opening expression of the new missionizing argumentation. It had been utilized earlier by Friar Paul and perhaps others as well; Barcelona was, if anything, a testing ground for a rapidly maturing new set of Christian claims.

Before undertaking our analysis of the 1263 confrontation, we must briefly note the sources available for its reconstruction.<sup>[21]</sup> Two widely divergent sources have survived. The first is a fairly brief Latin

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report, whose author is unknown;<sup>[22]</sup> the second is a lengthier Hebrew account from the pen of the Jewish spokesman Rabbi Moses ben Nahman.<sup>[23]</sup> While there is important information that is common to both reports, they disagree sharply on many issues, particularly in overall tone and in assessment of the outcome of the confrontation. For the Christian author, the confrontation was a stunning success for the Dominican friar; for the Jewish writer, the friar's ignorance and the rabbi's vastly superior abilities were evident at every turn, and even Christian observers were forced to appreciate the Dominican failure and the Jewish victory.

Not surprising, modern historians, Christian and Jewish, have polarized along the same lines. Christian accounts have tended to adopt the tone of the anonymous Christian report, and Jewish reconstructions have leaned heavily on, and sound much like, the Nahmanidean narrative. In the light of such polarization, one recent investigator has suggested that the event in its entirety ought not to be seen in theological or spiritual terms but must be viewed as a complex political maneuver.<sup>[24]</sup> In fact, however, it is not necessary to shift the focus of analysis. What must be done is to abandon the polarized views presented in the two conflicting sources and present the events in a more realistic and natural context.

This context is a fairly simple one—the new missionizing techniques and argumentation of the mid-thirteenth century. A new-style argumentation, based on Christological utilization of rabbinic texts, had been introduced into western Christendom. This approach seemed most promising for effective missionizing among the Jews. At a certain point, it seemed useful to afford the new approach a rigorous test. Such testing meant a public confrontation with authoritative Jewish spokesmen, who would be compelled to confront the issues raised by the new Christian claims. At best, such a public confrontation would show that the Jews lacked any serious response to the new challenge and that the new weapons for missionizing were virtually foolproof; at worst, the confrontation might expose a fatal flaw in the new approach, necessitating its abandonment. Somewhere in between best and worst, the public

confrontation might support the basic viability of the new tack, with evidence of a need for improvement and refinement. The exaggerated claims of both sources tend to obscure this realistic context, but this is surely the setting of the important Barcelona convocation. For one side—the powerful and aggressive—it represented the testing of a potentially effective new

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weapon for missionizing; for the other—the weak and defensive—it meant the development and presentation of adequate responses to a dangerous new challenge.

Any attempt to understand critically the confrontation at Barcelona must begin with recognition of the disparate roles of the Christian and Jewish participants. The former are clearly the initiators and the aggressors; the latter are limited by and large to defending themselves against Christian thrusts.

This discrepancy in roles is revealed first in the convoking of the meeting in Barcelona. Both the Latin and Hebrew accounts emphasize that the discussion was not negotiated by the two parties; it was engineered by the Christian side and foisted on the Jews. More specifically, it resulted from powerful pressures exerted by the Dominicans on King James I of Aragon. Had the king refused to order Jewish participation, the clash would never have taken place. This is indicated succinctly by the Latin text:

Moses the Jew, called "rabbi," was summoned from Gerona by the lord king at the urging of the Dominicans and was present there [at the royal palace in Barcelona] along with many other Jews, who seemed and were reputed among other Jews most learned.[25]

The Hebrew narrative by Rabbi Moses ben Nahman agrees. Rabbi Moses introduces his report by quoting a Talmudic passage that depicts claims and counterclaims on the part of the disciples of Jesus and the Jews. The point of this story is that, because these disciples of Jesus were allegedly supported by the political authorities, the Jews were forced to respond to their pointless questions. Nahmanides concludes:

In the same way I am transcribing those things which I said in reply to the errors of Friar Paul, who exceeded all bounds before our lord the king, his sages, and his advisors, may his glory increase and his reign prosper.[26]

Rabbi Moses then proceeds to a description of the events, beginning, "Our lord the king ordered me to dispute with Friar Paul in his palace in Barcelona, before himself and his advisors."[27] Thus, neither account attributes any measure of initiative to the Jews; to the contrary, both agree that the clash was the result of clerical instigation and royal command.[28]

According to the Latin record, the same disparity carried over to the structuring of the confrontation.

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Deliberations were undertaken with the lord king and with certain Dominicans and Franciscans who were present, not that the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ—which because of its certitude cannot be placed in dispute—be put in the center of attention with the Jews as uncertain, but that the truth of that faith be made manifest in order to destroy the Jews' errors and to shake the confidence of many Jews. . . . Friar Paul proposed to the said rabbi that, with the aid of God, he would prove from writings shared and accepted by the Jews the following contentions, in order: that the Messiah, who is called Christ, whom the Jews anticipate, has surely come already; also that the Messiah, as prophesied, would be divine and human; also that he suffered and was killed for the salvation of mankind; also that the laws and ceremonials ceased and should have ceased after the advent of the said Messiah.[29]

According to this report, the truth of Christianity was not to be put in question; rather, the Jews were to be refuted and shaken in their faith. The agenda, as here depicted, was indeed ordered in such a way as to make this possible. This is reflected first of all in the utilization of Jewish sources. As we have noted, this meant that, in fact, the truth of Christianity could not be impugned. Were Friar Paul successful, the Jews would have had to acknowledge Christianity on the basis of their own accepted religious literature. If he were unsuccessful, Christianity would not have been disproved. Only the effort to substantiate Christian truth from Jewish sources would have failed. This tack, through which the Christian side stood to lose nothing while the Jews were profoundly threatened, can only indicate Christian control. In addition, the four specific points chosen for the discussion likewise reflect a Christian point of view. They involve issues through which the truth of Christianity might be proved. No Jewish spokesman, given freedom of choice, would have selected such items for debate. Again, we emerge with a clear sense that the agenda was designed by the Christian side and forced on the Jews.

This image of Christian control of the agenda is altered somewhat in the account of Rabbi Moses. After indicating that he had been ordered to dispute publicly with Friar Paul, Nahmanides attempts to soften the portrait to some extent and to show himself in a less passive light. He recounts the following give-and-take:

I replied and said: "I shall do as the king commands, if you give me permission to speak as I wish. In this matter I request the permission of the king and of Friar Raymond of Penyafort and his associates who are here." Friar Raymond of Penyafort replied: "So long as you do not speak

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disrespectfully." I said to them: "I do not wish to stand before your judgment in this matter. However I do ask to speak as I wish concerning the disputation, just as you say what you wish. Indeed I do have the sense to speak properly, but it must be as I wish." They all then gave me permission to speak as I wished.

Then I responded and said: "The dispute between gentiles and Jews concerns many matters of tradition which do not involve the essence of faith. In this honored court, I wish to dispute only about matters that involve essentials." They all responded and said: "You have spoken well." Then we agreed to speak about the matter of the Messiah—whether he has already come, as is the belief of the Christians, or if he is yet to come, as is the belief of the Jews. Afterward we would speak of whether the Messiah is actually divine or if he is fully human, born of man and woman. Afterward we would speak of whether the Jews observe the true law or whether Christians do.[30]

Thus, while acknowledging that he was commanded to appear and debate, Nahmanides tries to picture himself as active in securing freedom of expression and establishing the agenda to be pursued. It should be noted that Rabbi Moses does not actually claim to have suggested the items for the discussion; he merely describes himself as setting the principle that essentials should be disputed. When speaking of the specific agenda, he says only, "Then we agreed to speak about. . ." However, the items for discussion, while close enough to the Latin report to be recognizable, are couched in terms that mitigate the sense of Christian initiative. Thus, for example, it is one thing to prove, on the basis of Jewish texts, that the Messiah has already come; it is another to debate whether the Messiah has come or not. Moreover, Rabbi Moses omits entirely, at this juncture, the crucial matter of utilization of Jewish texts as proof. As a result, the agenda he describes seems to presage a rather open discussion. The protagonists were to discuss whether the Messiah had come or not and whether Christians or Jews observe the true law. As Nahmanides presents the items of debate, it would seem that either side could win and either side could lose.

On this issue, however, it must be concluded that the Latin account is rigorously correct, while Rabbi Moses has, for a variety of reasons, blurred the reality. This is clear from the rest of his narrative. In the first place, Rabbi Moses blatantly contradicts himself. In the above-mentioned opening remarks, he insists that only essential matters be debated, and he indicates that, in the light of this principle, it was agreed

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to begin with the matter of the Messiah. Yet, in his depiction of the proceedings of the second day, he is objecting vigorously to focusing on the issue of the Messiah, claiming that it is not really the heart of the Christian-Jewish conflict.[31] More important still, while omitting any mention of the reliance on Jewish texts in his description of the agenda, Nahmanides does emphasize this crucial ploy as soon as the discussion is launched.[32] As noted, the use of this strategem radically transformed the nature of the confrontation: the Christian side had everything to gain and nothing to lose. That this device was in fact built into the very foundation of the discussion is reflected at every stage of Rabbi Moses' extensive

depiction of the proceedings. From all this, it is clear that the Latin report of the agenda is the accurate one and that the Hebrew account is distorted. Again, the firm sense is Christian initiative and control.

Finally, this same sense emerges from Nahmanides' detailed narrative. While he quotes himself at far greater length than his opponent, he also reports faithfully that he was always in the position of respondent to the thrusts of Friar Paul. At a number of points, Rabbi Moses depicts his efforts to assume a more active role and acknowledges total failure. At the beginning of the second day's discussion, he records the following significant exchange:

I said to our lord the king: "My lord, hear me." He said to me: "Let him speak first, for he is the interrogator."<sup>[33]</sup>

A bit later on the same day, when Friar Paul complained of the rabbi's lengthy replies, the king admonished: "Be silent, for he is to pose the questions."<sup>[34]</sup> On the fourth and last day of the clash, after his efforts to halt the proceedings had failed, the Jewish spokesman made his most determined effort to take the initiative, claiming that "justice requires that I pose the questions one day and Friar Paul answer me, since he posed questions which I answered for three days." King James's reply was curt and peremptory: "Nonetheless you must respond to him."<sup>[35]</sup> Thus, in every way, the picture is clear and consistent. The Dominicans and Friar Paul instigated the confrontation, set a carefully contrived agenda, and maintained the initiative throughout.

What were the strategies employed by Friar Paul in this confrontation? The key was the use of rabbinic literature. As we have seen, Barcelona was not the beginning of such utilization of the Talmud; it was in a sense the end of the first phase of this use. Its use by Friar Paul involves, as we have already suggested, rabbinic exegesis of important

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biblical verses, on the one hand, and rabbinic traditions independent of biblical moorings, on the other. Let us examine the early stages of the discussion for examples of each.

Friar Paul opened the formal proceedings at Barcelona by quoting Genesis 49:10. To be sure, this verse had, over the ages, been a source of lively Christian-Jewish polemical exchange.<sup>[36]</sup> It was not Friar Paul's ultimate intention to become lost in this morass. According to the report of Nahmanides, Friar Paul opened by citing the wellknown verse and drawing its normal Christological implication:

Thus the prophet says that Judah shall forever exercise power, until [the advent of] the Messiah, who will come from him. Therefore, today, when you lack the scepter [of political power] and the ruler's staff, the Messiah, who is of the seed of Judah, must have already come, and he possesses authority.[37]

Rabbi Moses rebuttal was traditional and predictable. He argued that Jacob did not specify continuous kingship for Judah; instead, he foretold that it would never be totally withdrawn.

The intention is that, at all times when kingship will exist among the entire Israelite people, it will be reserved for Judah. If, because of our sins, kingship will be abolished, it will [eventually] return to Judah.[38]

All this is the norm predicted by Jacob. In fact, pre-Christian history, according to Rabbi Moses, already showed a number of exceptions to the rule.

The proof of my views [lies in the fact that] prior to Jesus, there were many periods during which kingship was annulled for Judah and not for [all] Israel and many periods when kingship was annulled for both Judah and [all] Israel. For, during the seventy years of Babylonian exile, there was no monarchy in Judah or [all of] Israel whatsoever. During the period of the Second Temple there reigned from Judah only Zerubbabel and his sons briefly. For three hundred and eighty years thereafter, until the destruction, there reigned the priests of the Hasmonean family and their servants.[39]

Thus, argues Nahmanides, Jacob was foretelling ideal circumstances. Real Jewish history showed gaps in kingship and periods of monarchy in which Judah did not play its predicted role. Therefore, the contemporary reality of lack of kingship was in no sense a testimony to the coming of the Messiah.

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It is at this point, in the wake of Rabbi Moses's fairly predictable response, that Friar Paul turns the attack in a new direction by introducing a rabbinic text:

In all those periods [to which you referred], even though there weren't kings, there was political authority. For thus they explained in the Talmud: " 'The scepter shall not depart from Jacob'—these are the exilarchs in Babylonia, who rule the people with a scepter. 'Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet'—these are the descendants of Hillel who teach Torah publicly." [40] Today, you lack the ordination known in the Talmud, you have lost that authority, and you have among you no one worthy of being designated "rabbi." [41]

Introduction of the talmudic passage allows Friar Paul to reject Nahmanides' contention that the Jews had suffered a series of lapses of political authority, for the talmudic statement seems to suggest unbroken Jewish political power. Thus, the obvious lack of such authority in the days of the disputants must point to the intervening advent of the Messiah.

What has happened here is quotation of standard biblical prophecy, eliciting of anticipated Jewish responses, and then introduction of rabbinic exegesis that—it is claimed—substantiates the Christian case and repudiates the traditional stance of the Jews. While rooted in the venerable tradition of Christian use of prophetic predictions, this new tactic is creative, innovative, and challenging. It imposes a second layer of authority on the initial Jewish reverence for the Bible; it suggests to the Jews that their own esteemed teachers read the biblical text in a Christological mode.

Let us adduce yet a second example, again involving a biblical passage long disputed by Christians and Jews. On the first day of the confrontation, not long after the discussion of Genesis 49:10, Friar Paul introduced the famous passage in Isaiah which speaks of the suffering servant of the Lord and suggested its standard Christological interpretation, ending with the question, "Do you believe that this passage speaks of the Messiah?"[42] Rabbi Moses's response was again predictable.

According to its true sense, [this passage] speaks only of the people of Israel in the aggregate, for thus the prophets always designate them—Israel my servant, Jacob my servant.

Friar Paul's response is reported only briefly by Nahmanides, but the point is clear.

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But I shall show you from the words of your sages that it [the passage] speaks of the Messiah.[43]

The approach is the same—introduction of standard biblical passages, eliciting predictable Jewish responses, with Friar Paul then arguing that the traditional Jewish objections are in fact belied by rabbinic tradition itself. The authoritative literature of the Jews supported Christological lines of exegesis.

The second pattern of utilization of talmudic literature involves rabbinic dicta unrelated to the Bible. Let us cite two early examples from Barcelona, both adduced in support of the initial Christian claim that the Messiah has already appeared. The first involves one of the aggadic statements that connect the advent of the Messiah with the destruction of the Second Temple.

A certain man was plowing when his ox lowed. An Arab passed by and said: "Jew! Jew! Unhitch your ox; unhitch your pair; unhitch your plow; for the Temple has been destroyed." He unhitched his ox, unhitched his pair, and unhitched his plow. The ox then lowed a second time. The Arab said to him: "Hitch up your ox; hitch up your pair; hitch up your plow; for your Messiah has been born."<sup>[44]</sup>

Friar Paul argued here, in utmost simplicity, that this rabbinic statement reflects overt rabbinic recognition of the advent of the Messiah.

Let us cite a second instance of similar use of freestanding rabbinic dicta. Friar Paul adduced a second aggadah to prove that the Messiah had already come.

That fellow [Friar Paul] returned and said that, in the Talmud, it is said explicitly that Rabbi Joshua ben Levi asked Elijah when the Messiah would come. Elijah answered him. "Ask the Messiah himself." Rabbi Joshua ben Levi said: "Where is he?" Elijah said: "At the entrance of Rome, among the ill." Rabbi Joshua ben Levi went there and found him. . . . Thus he has already come and is in Rome.<sup>[45]</sup>

The argument is a simple one. Friar Paul claims that the rabbis themselves—in their better moments—gave expression to views that in effect substantiated the truth of Christianity.

Having described the methodology of Friar Paul's argument, let us now turn our attention to its substance. To do so, let us cite once more the agenda as depicted in each of our two sources:

Friar Paul proposed to the said rabbi that, with the aid of God, he would prove from writings shared and accepted by the Jews the following con-

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tentions, in order: that the Messiah, who is called Christ, whom the Jews anticipate, has surely come already; also that the Messiah, as prophesied, should be divine and human; also that he suffered and was killed for the salvation of mankind; also that the laws and ceremonials ceased and should have ceased after the advent of the said Messiah.<sup>[46]</sup>

Then we agreed to speak about the matter of the Messiah—whether he has already come, as is the belief of Christians, or if he is yet to come, as is the belief of the Jews. Afterward we would speak of whether the

Messiah is actually divine or if he is fully human, born of man and woman. Afterward we would speak of whether the Jews observe the true law or whether the Christians do.[47]

We have already suggested that, on this issue, the Christian account is more accurate. In any case, what is reflected here of the substance of the discussion? We have earlier noted that, in mounting missionizing argumentation, the twin goals were normally to present a case for the truth of one's own religious faith and to raise claims against the validity of the religious tradition of the opponent group. The agenda adumbrated in the Latin protocol reflects clearly these two purposes—proofs that Jesus was truly the Messiah and argument against the central pillar of Jewish religious tradition, the law.

Friar Paul's first goal was to prove that Jesus was the Messiah promised in biblical revelation. If that assertion could have been proved to the Jews, then those Jews would have had to acknowledge that Christianity, based on belief in Jesus as Messiah (and more), was true. The choice of the messianic role of Jesus as the central positive contention to be argued was an intelligent one. First, the messianic doctrine was one that Jews shared with Christians; it involved none of the inherent problematics of such tenets as Incarnation or the Trinitarian nature of the deity. It was the simplest issue to argue with Jews. In addition, proof of the messianic role of Jesus included *eo ipso* a negative assertion with regard to the Jews and their fate. If, in fact, Jesus was the promised Messiah, then all the messianic predictions had been fulfilled with his coming (or comings), leaving the Jews bereft of messianic hopes for the future. In this sense, the positive thrust of the argumentation included a powerfully negative corollary.

The effort to prove Jesus' messianic role was of course not new to Barcelona; it was the oldest element in Christian argumentation against the Jews. Now, how did Friar Paul, through use of rabbinic literature, hope to mount an argument for Jesus' messianic role? By proving the truth of a series of three independent statements that,

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when combined, afforded unshakable evidence of Jesus as Messiah. If he could successfully argue that the Messiah had already come, that the Messiah was prophetically predicted to be both divine and human, and that the suffering and death of the Messiah were likewise prophetically predicted, then only one figure could possibly demonstrate these three major characteristics. That figure would be Jesus of Nazareth. I have elsewhere designated this tactic "deliberate abstraction." [48] In arguing that the Messiah had already come, Friar Paul did not wish to introduce the historical figure of Jesus. He wished to deal with all three assertions independently and abstractly, only at the end combining the strands into irrefutable proof for the truth of Christianity. This tactic of deliberate abstraction was artificial and problematic. As we shall see, Nahmanides attacked it vigorously and Friar Raymond Martin abandoned it completely.

Let us look more closely at the three individual assertions. The first is clearly the decisive one. If the Messiah has already come, then it is likely to have been Jesus, and, in any case, the Jews have lost all hope for the future. Nahmanides quotes himself as saying that "there has been no one who has claimed or concerning whom it has been claimed that he is the Messiah, except for Jesus."<sup>[49]</sup> The Latin source quotes Nahmanides in much the same way.

Then in the palace of the lord king, the said Jew was asked whether the Messiah, who is called Christ, has come. He responded with the assertion that he has not come. He added that the Messiah and Christ are the same and that, if it could be proved to him that the Messiah had come, it could be believed to apply to none other than him, namely, Jesus Christ, in whom the Christians believe, since no one else had come who has dared to assume for himself this title nor has there been anyone else who has been believed to be Christ.<sup>[50]</sup>

In effect, Rabbi Moses would have been willing to concede the truth of Christianity if it could be proved that the Messiah had already come.<sup>[51]</sup> The other two assertions, that the Messiah was predicted to be both divine and human and was fated to suffer and die, served a dual purpose. They reinforced the identification of Jesus as the Messiah, which would have flowed in any case from the initial assertion of the prior advent of the Messiah, and, at the same time, they served to diffuse two major traditional Jewish objections to Christianity—the doctrine of Incarnation and the notion of an ignominious death for the Messiah.

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The fourth and final item on the agenda is difficult to discuss with certainty, since the issue was never truly joined during the confrontation. Using the sketchy information provided in our two extant sources and the further development of this argumentation, we are justified, I believe, in identifying this item as an attack on the central commitment of the Jews, that is, the commitment to their law. Just as the first three assertions attempted to prove a central Christian contention—that Jesus was the promised Messiah—the fourth sought to obliterate the core of Jewish faith—assurance of the validity of Jewish law. The projected tactic was the same as that used in the previous arguments. Jewish literature itself, both rabbinic exegesis of the Bible and freestanding rabbinic dicta, were to be adduced to prove that Jewish law had lost its validity and should no longer be observed. What precise texts Friar Paul intended to utilize in proving this point cannot, of course, be known. In any case, this fourth point was to serve as a complement to the pro-Christian conclusion of the first three items on the agenda. Friar Paul intended to prove the truth of central Christian beliefs and the nullity of key Jewish commitments.<sup>[52]</sup>

Our examination of the strategies and substance of the Barcelona confrontation leads inevitably to the question of results (for now, from the Christian perspective). In attempting to answer this question, I begin with a negative observation. Neither the Latin nor the Hebrew report mentions a formal body of judges who were to decide the outcome of the deliberations. Indeed, this notion makes no sense. Since the

ultimate purpose of the confrontation was to influence Jewish thinking, Christian judges and their view of the events would have meant nothing.

Having removed imaginary judges from consideration, we are in a position to build on our earlier observations and ask realistically how the Christian protagonists saw the outcome of the proceedings. For the Dominican instigators of the clash, a decisive victory would have entailed convincing the Jewish spokesmen of the truth of the majority faith and of the nullity of Judaism. This obviously was not achieved. A decisive setback would have involved the exposure of a flaw in Friar Paul's approach so basic as to force him and his supporters to end this line of missionizing altogether. This too did not happen. In fact, a prolonged discussion took place. Neither side won decisively; both sides could savor a measure of satisfaction. Thus, the confident assertions of both the Latin and Hebrew reports are exaggerated, but they are

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not false. The results were sufficiently ambiguous to allow both parties to claim success. At the same time, to be sure, both parties had to feel a measure of dissatisfaction as well. But this rarely shows up in written records left for posterity.

Given these ambiguous results, the important issue is no longer victory or defeat; it is the reactions of both sides in the wake of the public debate. The Christian camp reveals its positive assessment of the proceedings in its determination to press the new campaign. There is certainly no sense that Friar Paul and his strategies for proselytizing among the Jews had been discredited. Nahmanides' own account of the aftermath of the debate illustrates this clearly. Hearing rumors in the royal court that the king and the Dominicans were planning to visit the synagogue of Barcelona shortly after the termination of the disputation, Rabbi Moses postponed his planned return to Gerona in order to be present. Both King James and Friar Raymond of Penyafort preached before the Jews. Although they did not utilize Friar Paul's new argumentation, their immediate visit to the synagogue of Barcelona reflects the Christian sense of achievement and determination to press the perceived advantage.[53]

More revealing yet is the ongoing support for Friar Paul in his missionizing endeavors. Had his approach been convincingly rebutted, neither ecclesiastical nor secular authorities would have wished him to continue. The Christian perception of the proceedings at Barcelona and their outcome is reflected in the series of royal edicts enacted at the end of August 1263, a scant month after the Barcelona confrontation. The most important of these, for our purposes, is the order to the Jews, dated August 29, 1263. As we have seen, King James I commanded his Jews to make themselves available for the missionizing sermons of Friar Paul Christian. Particularly noteworthy is the king's insistence that the Jews show Friar Paul those of their books he might require to make the truth known to them—precisely the strategem that was so crucial in his encounter with Rabbi Moses ben Nahman.[54]

It is widely agreed that the Latin account of the disputation at Barcelona is intimately linked to the royal orders of late August 1263. Specifically, it must be seen as the rationale for the expanded preaching campaign sanctioned by the monarch. This brief record was intended to show the main lines of Christian achievement at Barcelona and thus provide the basis for the new royal edicts. While the Latin account has been extensively analyzed by Baer, a few brief remarks

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are in order. Clearly, this is not—and was not intended to be—an exhaustive description of the debate at Barcelona. Nor was it intended to serve as a debater's manual; such a detailed guide was not necessary, since the Christian protagonist in the Barcelona proceedings was to be the central figure in the new preaching campaign. What the Christian author intended was simply to sketch out the main lines of what he perceived as a Christian victory and thus provide justification for the further missionizing of Friar Paul. While the Latin account does precisely this, it is uneven in its treatment of the debate. As we have seen, its depiction of the convening of the confrontation and its description of the agenda is accurate. Its portrait of the proceedings is often quite weak. As Baer has noted, the references to the issue of the title "rabbi" and to an earlier consideration of the Trinity are woefully misplaced. When the Latin report of the debate itself is compared to the Hebrew narrative, the sketchiness and arbitrariness of the former is apparent. These weaknesses must, however, be seen in context. The author's intention was a brief and compelling statement of the Christian "victory," which is just what was provided.

Thus, Friar Paul's performance at Barcelona must have been seen in a positive light, given the continued support of his efforts. Indeed, at the end of the 1260s, his field of activity was substantially expanded, as he brought his missionizing campaign to northern France, operating under the aegis of the pious Louis IX. We have already noted an edict of 1269 that commanded Jewish presence at the missionizing sermons of Friar Paul and random evidence indicating that the edict was carried out.<sup>[55]</sup> While the evidence for his preaching in France is far skimpier than our information for Barcelona, it seems that the same basic approach was still in use. Thus, there is no evidence of an alteration of tactics on his part or for withdrawal of support by the authorities.

As we shall see, however, key figures in the Dominican Order were not fully satisfied with Friar Paul's performance. While they were not disenchanted with his innovative approach, they were convinced that a more closely argued—and thus more effective—case could be made on the basis of the rabbinic literature that Friar Paul had begun to exploit. Such sentiments underlay the massive research and analysis that resulted in Friar Raymond Martin's *Pugio Fidei*, which we shall study more closely in chapter 7. In a sense, Friar Paul had convinced these colleagues of the fundamental viability of the approach but had left

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them with the feeling that there was much to be done in perfecting it. His innovative efforts thus clearly reflect the enhanced commitment to serious missionizing among the Jews, represent a major

breakthrough in such missionizing efforts, and pose for the Jews of western Christendom a serious new challenge.

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## Jewish Responses to the New Argumentation

### Early Responses

The new missionizing argumentation presented a serious challenge. Given the coercion exercised, there was no way for the Jews to avoid hearing the innovative argumentation. As suggested earlier, these new approaches had many advantages, intellectual, psychological, and tactical. Jewish leadership had to concern itself with the development of effective counterargumentation that would blunt any potentially harmful impact the new claims might have.

The new-style sally reflected in the *Milhemet<sup>[4]</sup>Mizvah<sup>[5]</sup>* was not a serious one, and the Jewish response need not detain us. The rabbinic text used in Rabbi Isaac ben Yedaiah's *Commentary on the Aggadot of the Talmud* was far more significant and, as we have seen, was used in the Barcelona confrontation by Friar Paul. Rabbi Isaac's response shows us Jewish attempts to grapple with the new Christian thrusts at an early stage; it is lengthy and addresses a number of issues. First, he clarifies the Jewish conception of the Messiah, which is, he insists, radically different from that of the Christians.

We anticipate and believe in a King Messiah who will arise, one man among his people, imbued with divine spirit. He will rouse himself to govern his people and to serve as king over them and, anointed with oil, to extricate them from the travails of their subjugation. That king will be a king of flesh and blood, a pious and upright man, and his God will assist him in extricating the people from the burden of rulers who oppress them. . . . That king will arise from the midst of his brothers, as did Saul and David and Solomon his son, the kings who ruled as divine emissaries and whom God had chosen for that purpose and who were anointed with oil by the prophet. Thus will be the King Messiah. . . .

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That king whom the prophets promised has not yet come, but he will in the future come. If the sounds of his chariot have tarried to this point, nonetheless his time is near and he will surely come. He will not tarry.<sup>[6]</sup>

Rabbi Isaac argues that the effort to see in the rabbinic statement proof of Jesus is hopelessly misguided, for the rabbis were talking about a completely different messianic figure. Nothing can be gleaned here to support Christian truth.

The claim that the rabbinic text could not reflect the Christian messiah still left the problem of the text itself, and Rabbi Isaac explains its meaning as well.

With regard to your question as to what [the rabbis] of blessed memory came to teach us by saying that he was created in their days, know you, who study and scrutinize these words of theirs simplemindedly, that they of blessed memory followed, in these words of theirs, in the paths of the prophets who speak of something which will happen in the future in the language of the past. Since they saw in prophetic vision that which was to occur in the future, they spoke about it in the past tense and testified firmly that it had happened, to teach the certainty of his [God's] words—may he be blessed—and his positive promise that can never change and his beneficent message that will not be altered. The

sages of the Talmud looked back to Moses and the rest of the prophets—prophets of truth—and said here that the Messiah had been created, since the people was certain in the Lord that a new king would arise for them.<sup>[2]</sup>

Thus Rabbi Isaac finds the Christian reading of the text impossible and proposes a simpler Jewish reading, a projection of future events in the language of the past, that he claims is a venerable and accepted style of literary presentation.

There is one more point in Rabbi Isaac's lengthy rebuttal which deserves attention. It is a point of view that we have already encountered in the *Milbemet*<sup>[3]</sup> *Mizvah*<sup>[4]</sup> and will encounter again in Nahmanides' responses in Barcelona.

If it is as you say—that our Messiah has come some time ago and went to Rome, where he established for himself a residence and a walled city—then how could the Jews of that generation not believe Elijah who came to inform them about him. Indeed he was their prophet when he was among the living and appeared to them now to inform them that he [the Messiah] had come to save their lost souls. If they would listen to him,

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then on that very day he [the Messiah] would come; he would not tarry if they would listen to his voice and believe in the Trinity. He would gather up their exiled, and the children would return to their borders. How could the sages of that generation not believe the faith of the Christians through the prophet who came from the divine to teach them that this was the Messiah of the Lord who had been caught up in their degradation and who would redeem Israel and never know death?<sup>[5]</sup>

Thus, in addition to the earlier claim of the impropriety of reading Christian conceptions into Jewish sources, Rabbi Isaac further argues the implausibility of the Christian reading of the text. If the Christian reading were accepted, then the Jewish failure to heed the message contained in such a text is beyond understanding. While a cogent response, this early counterargument was a dangerous one, allowing for Christian counter-counterclaims of Jewish blindness and malevolence in misunderstanding and rejecting divinely sent messages both prophetic and rabbinic.

In any case, Rabbi Isaac affords us a fine sense of early Jewish response to the new argumentation. Neither the thrusts nor the parries are yet as sharp as they will eventually be. Both sides still had to learn its full implications.

### Rabbi Moses ben Nahman

As we have already seen, the Barcelona disputation of 1263 represented an effort on the part of the Christian initiators of that confrontation to test the new missionizing tactics developed by Friar Paul Christian. As a result, the Jewish leadership summoned by the king of Aragon to respond to the arguments of Friar Paul bore heavy responsibility for formulating and disseminating the requisite Jewish responses. The key figure, apparently singled out by the Jews themselves, was the venerable rabbi of Gerona, Moses ben Nahman. The technique of choosing one respected figure to respond was a calculated risk. The disadvantage was the inherent limitations in one man's capacity. Ranged against this consideration was the advantage that flowed from a unified, consistent, and coherent response to the new assault. Given the later experience at Tortosa, where a projected group response often degenerated into internal disagreements and backbiting,<sup>[4]</sup> the choice at Barcelona was probably a good one. To be sure, Rabbi Moses' stature may have made the decision relatively easy.

By 1263, Rabbi Moses was already in his late sixties and had achieved unusual eminence among his coreligionists. Scholars of the past few decades have begun to investigate in depth his diversified oeuvre and to suggest that he was one of the most creative figures in medieval Jewish life.<sup>[5]</sup> In introducing a volume of studies devoted to aspects of Nahmanides' wide-ranging achievement, Isadore Twersky asserts:

We may, with care and precision, with complete semantic accountability, affirm that Ramban was truly versatile, original, and profound. His creative contributions to the multiple disciplines which molded Judaism and through which the Jewish genius expressed itself were innovative and substantive, intense and penetrating. Furthermore, his massive and original literary oeuvre was historically influential and vibrant; his great song continued to reverberate through the ages. Nahmanides is not merely of arcane or antiquarian significance—an interesting figure whose works should be salvaged and studied in compliance with the rules of the scholarly game; he appears on the historical scene as a towering figure whose resplendent multidimensional achievement was formative and remained resonant—constantly relevant, exciting and stimulating, eliciting admiration and amplification and, of course, dissent and qualification. His works were always alive and influential.<sup>[6]</sup>

Beyond his sheer intellectual power, Rabbi Moses offered additional virtues to his fellow Jews at this critical juncture. A number of decades earlier, during a period of concern over the writings of Rabbi Moses ben Maimon (a concern that laid bare a number of fundamental tensions in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Jewish life), Rabbi Moses ben Nahman had played an important conciliatory role.<sup>[7]</sup> Thus, in 1263, he had already established his credentials as a man of intellectual ability and social sensitivity. Both qualities were essential for Jewish success at Barcelona. In addition, if we are to believe Nahmanides himself, he already enjoyed the favor of the King of Aragon.

Rabbi Moses bore the heavy responsibility of adequately formulating a public Jewish response to the new missionizing arguments of Friar Paul. He had to address simultaneously two different audiences—Friar Paul and the Dominicans and (more important) his Jewish confreres. Nahmanides was attempting to persuade Friar Paul and the Dominicans of the fundamental flaws in their new missionizing argumentation, hoping to convince them to abandon it. Such success would represent optimal Jewish achievement under the trying cir-

cumstances of 1263. His second goal was to prove to his fellow Jews that the new missionizing arguments were as unconvincing as the old. In pursuing this second objective, Rabbi Moses had to respond first to the substance of the new argumentation and find adequate counterthrusts. At the same time, he also indulged—at least in his written report—in an ad hominem assault on Friar Paul Christian, hoping to show his Jewish audience that their adversary was unlettered and unskilled and thus, by implication, his arguments were void of significance. It seems doubtful that Rabbi Moses could have denigrated Friar Paul in the public manner that he reports; nonetheless, this was an important element in his overall strategy.

The main lines of Nahmanides' argumentation took several directions. The most fundamental but least efficient tactic was to contest the interpretation of individual rabbinic passages advanced by Friar Paul. Let us note two examples of such argumentation.

Friar Paul's opening gambit was to cite the traditional Genesis 49:10 and to claim that the disappearance of Jewish political authority clearly meant that the Messiah foretold in Jacob's utterance had already come. Nahmanides' predictable response was to argue that Jacob's statement focused on the promise of eventual rule to be vested in the tribe of Judah. The verse in no way, according to Rabbi Moses, obviated the suspension of Judah's rule for periods of time, and indeed such suspensions of Judean rule had already taken place prior to early Christianity. Despite all suspensions, Jacob's prophecy indicated that rule would eventually be vested in the tribe of Judah. All of this was standard. The novelty of Friar Paul's approach lay in his next move, in which he argued, on the basis of rabbinic tradition, that no such suspension had ever taken place in early Jewish history and thus the current and obvious lack of Jewish political authority can only mean that the Messiah has come. To prove this contention, Friar Paul adduced the exegesis on Genesis 49:10 found in the Babylonian Talmud. According to this rabbinic statement, the scepter of the verse refers to the exilarchs of Babylonia and the legislator to the patriarchs of Palestine. Thus, concludes Friar Paul, rabbinic understanding of the verse shows unbroken political authority from early Israelite history on, with a break occurring only once and clearly associated with the advent of the Messiah. Rabbi Moses contends in response that Friar Paul has simply not understood the meaning of the talmudic passage.

I shall inform you that the intention of the rabbis of blessed memory was never to explain the verse except in terms of actual kingship. However,

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you fail to understand law and *halachah*, [comprehending] only a bit of the *aggadot* with which you have become familiar. This matter which the sages mentioned relates to the fact that, in narrowly legal terms, no one should judge a case by himself and be free of liability, unless he received authorization from the patriarch who is like a king. They said that, during the time of exile, since there are those who are of the seed of the monarchy and who enjoy some authority from gentile kings, like the exilarchs in Babylonia and the patriarchs in Palestine, they have the right to confer authorization. This practice was in force for the sages of the Talmud for more than four hundred years subsequent to Jesus. But it was not the sense of the sages of the Talmud that [this was a reference to] the seed of the scepter and legislator which are from Judah. But the prophet promised Judah that kingship in Israel would be his, and the promise was made of complete kingship.<sup>[8]</sup>

Rabbi Moses's charge is that Friar Paul has distorted the meaning of the rabbinic text, taking it far beyond the narrow legal framework intended by the rabbis.

At a later point in the disputation, Friar Paul introduced rabbinic exegesis on Isaiah 52:13.

Behold your sages said, concerning the Messiah, that he is more exalted than the angels. Now this can only be a reference to Jesus, who is both messiah and divinity. He brought [as proof] what is said in the *aggadah*: " '[He] shall prosper, be exalted, and be raised to great heights.'<sup>[9]</sup> He shall prosper beyond Abraham, be exalted beyond Moses, and be raised to greater heights than the serving angels."<sup>[10]</sup>

Nahmanides suggests in rebuttal that, because of his lack of knowledge of rabbinic literature, Friar Paul has simply misread the rabbinic statement.

Our sages say this regularly of all the saintly—the saintly are greater than the serving angels. Indeed Moses said to an angel: "Where I sit, you have no right to stand."<sup>[11]</sup> With regard to all Israel they said: "Israel is more beloved than the serving angels."<sup>[12]</sup> Rather, the intention of the author of this *aggadah* concerning the Messiah was as follows. Abraham converted the peoples and preached to them the faith of [the Holy One] blessed be he and disputed Nimrod and was unafraid of him. Moses did yet more, since he stood in his insignificance in opposition to Pharaoh, the great and wicked king, and showed him no quarter with respect to the terrible plagues with which he afflicted him and removed Israel from his grasp. The serving angels are deeply involved in the matter of redemption. . . . But the Messiah will do more than all of them. "His mind will be elevated

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in the ways of the Lord."<sup>[13]</sup> He will come and command the pope and all the kings of the nations in the name of God: "Let my people go that they may worship me."<sup>[14]</sup> He will perform great and many signs and will be utterly unafraid of them. He will stand in the city of Rome until he destroys it.<sup>[15]</sup>

Again, Nahmanides suggests a misunderstanding of the true meaning and intent of the rabbinic statement adduced by Friar Paul. Here the failure is alleged to be a reflection of the friar's woeful lack of knowledge of rabbinic literature, leading him to misunderstand commonly used imagery.

This first tactic was both uneconomical—in that it required separate argumentation on each specific rabbinic citation—and somewhat problematic. Exegesis of rabbinic statements and counter-exegesis can quickly bog down, although this ultimately was advantageous to Rabbi Moses and not to Friar Paul. Rabbi Moses took a number of approaches that were broader and more efficient.

The first of these pressed a line already noted in Rabbi Isaac ben Yedaiah—the contention that rabbinically held Christological views are inherently implausible. This was, in fact, Nahmanides' opening ploy, even before Friar Paul cited his first text. Friar Paul claimed that numerous statements submerged in rabbinic literature, when properly combined, present a picture of the Messiah that Jesus of Nazareth could readily be seen to fulfill. The obvious problem with such a claim is that it presupposes a remarkable level of insensitivity on the part of generations of Jewish scholars; it means that none of them properly understood texts with which they were deeply absorbed. Nahmanides was quick to pounce on this issue.

Let him answer me on this matter. Does he wish to say that the sages of the Talmud believed that Jesus was the Messiah and believed that he was fully human and truly divine, as believed by the Christians? But it is well known that the incident of Jesus took place at the time of the Second Temple and that he was born and killed prior to the destruction of the Second Temple. However, the sages of the Talmud lived after this destruction, sages like Rabbi Akiva and his associates. Those who codified the Mishnah, Rabbi and Rabbi Nathan, lived long after the destruction of the Second Temple—all the more so Rav Ashi, who composed and wrote the Talmud and who lived approximately four hundred years after the destruction of the Second Temple. If these sages believed in the messianic role of Jesus, that he was truly the Messiah and that his faith and religion were true, and if they wrote these things from which Friar Paul

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intends to prove this, then how did they remain in the Jewish faith and in their former tradition? For they were surely Jews, remained in the Jewish faith, and died Jews.<sup>[16]</sup>

Here Rabbi Moses expresses the problem in extreme fashion, asking how the Jewish sages could have believed in Jesus and remained Jews. In fact, however, Friar Paul was not claiming that these sages believed in Jesus; he was arguing that their utterances reveal a view of the Messiah that Jesus, in fact, fulfilled. Rabbi Moses addresses this subtler view as well.

Why did they not apostasize and convert to the religion of Jesus as Friar Paul did? He understood from their words that the faith of the Christians is true—heaven forfend—and went and apostasized on account of their words. But these sages themselves and their students who learned Torah from them lived and died Jews, as we are today.<sup>[17]</sup>

This formulation is more to the point. If there are such clear implications in the teaching of the rabbis, then why were none of them or their followers attuned to them? The possibility of such corporate insensitivity is very remote. Nonetheless, since it is possible, although unlikely, Friar Paul insisted on examining the issues on their merit. While this argument was not successful in obviating the debate and derailing Friar Paul's effort, this claim of Nahmanides remained an important point of defense addressed

to his Jewish audience. It suggested that this entire new line of Dominican argumentation was fundamentally fallacious.

In many ways, Nahmanides' most effective weapon at Barcelona was to insist, from the outset, on direct discussion of the Christological implications of the rabbinic dicta advanced by Friar Paul. Rather than debate the messianic implications of these rabbinic statements in the abstract, Nahmanides introduced Jesus at every turn. Sensing a serious weakness in many of the claims of Friar Paul, Rabbi Moses pressed the issue repeatedly, urging that the rabbinic statements cited be juxtaposed to the historical Jesus.

The Latin report contains an interesting reference to this ploy.

There in the palace of the lord king, the said Jew was asked whether the Messiah, who is called Christ, had come. He responded with the assertion that he has not come. He added that the Messiah and Christ are the same and that, if it could be proved to him that the messiah had come, it could be believed to apply to none other than him, namely, Jesus Christ,

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in whom the Christians believe, since no one else has come who has dared to assume for himself this title nor has there been anyone else who has been believed to be Christ.<sup>[18]</sup>

Nahmanides did, in all likelihood, say this. The statement was not wrung out of him, however; it was exploited by him as a means of refuting Friar Paul's contentions.

To put this line of Jewish rebuttal in context, let us note one of the earliest exchanges. When Friar Paul adduced the well-known story that tells of the simultaneous destruction of the Second Temple and birth of the Messiah, Nahmanides agrees to accept the story provisionally, "for it affords proof for my case." He goes on to spell this out.

Behold it says that, on the day of destruction, after the Temple was destroyed, on that very day the Messiah was born. Thus, Jesus is not the Messiah as you say, for he was born and killed prior to the destruction of the Second Temple. Indeed his birth was in fact approximately two hundred years prior to the destruction of the Temple, and even according to your reckoning it was seventy-three years earlier.<sup>[19]</sup>

According to Rabbi Moses, this silenced Friar Paul. However, an observer stepped in to press Friar Paul's strategy.

The debate does not now concern Jesus. The question is only if the Messiah has come or not. You say that he has not come and this book of yours says that he has come.<sup>[20]</sup>

Here the two strategies are clearly contrasted: the Christian effort to abstract deliberately and create a broad portrait of the Messiah and the Jewish attempt to introduce Jesus immediately and concretely. There can be little doubt that this tactic of contrived abstraction was artificial and weak. Since the ultimate goal was to convince Jews of the truth of Christianity, the artificiality of this tactic made this line of Jewish response particularly telling. Again, for Rabbi Moses's Jewish audience, this was an effective rebuttal, and, in fact, it is clear that the Dominicans absorbed this criticism and made necessary alterations in their approach as a result.

Let us note one more instance of Rabbi Moses's insistence on introducing the historical figure of Jesus. Here, the Jewish spokesman goes beyond the rabbinic texts cited by Friar Paul and beyond the limits imposed on Jewish rebuttal. It is this exchange and Rabbi Moses's record of it that in all likelihood most aroused subsequent Dominican

ire. In his long opening remarks on the second day, Rabbi Moses returned to the issue of the historical Jesus. When badgered by Friar Paul about whether he believed that the Messiah had come, Nahmanides replied:

No. Rather I believe and know that he has not come. There has been no one who has claimed or concerning whom it has been claimed that he is the Messiah, except for Jesus. And I cannot believe that he is the Messiah. For the prophet had said concerning the Messiah: "He shall rule from sea to sea, from the river to the ends of the earth."<sup>[21]</sup> Jesus, however, had no rule; rather, during his lifetime, he was pursued by his enemies and forced to hide from them. Ultimately he fell into their hands and could not save himself. How then could he redeem all of Israel? All the more so after his death he had no rule. For Roman rule does not come from him. Rather, even before they believed in him, the city of Rome ruled the world. After they took on his faith, they lost much power. Now the followers of Mohammed have greater rule than the Romans. Furthermore the prophet says that, in the times of the Messiah, "no longer will they need to teach one another to know the Lord; all of them shall know me."<sup>[22]</sup> He says: "For as the waters fill the sea, so shall the land be filled with knowledge of the Lord."<sup>[23]</sup> He also says: "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not take up sword against nation; they shall never again know war."<sup>[24]</sup> However, from the days of Jesus to the present, all the world has been full of violence and robbery. Indeed the Christians spill blood more than the other peoples, while at the same time they are sexually promiscuous. My lord the king, how difficult it would be for you and your knights if they could "never again know war." The prophet further says concerning the Messiah: "His mouth shall be a rod to smite the land."<sup>[25]</sup> The rabbis explain in the book of *Iore* in Friar Paul's possession: "They report to King Messiah, 'A certain state has rebelled against you.' He then says, 'Let the locust come and destroy it.' They report to him, 'A certain district has rebelled against you.' He says, 'Let the locust come and decimate it.'<sup>[26]</sup> This, however, did not happen with Jesus.<sup>[27]</sup>

What Nahmanides has done again is refuse to allow Friar Paul to reconstruct piecemeal his portrait of the rabbis' Messiah. He insists on introjecting the historical Jesus and arguing that he did not fulfill the criteria established for the Messiah. While he closes this lengthy statement with a reference to rabbinic utterance and thus returns to the ground rules established for the confrontation, in fact, Rabbi Moses went beyond the established guidelines and argued, along lines we have already encountered, that Jesus did not fulfill biblical criteria

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either—a statement that undoubtedly aroused the ire of his Dominican listeners.

Rabbi Moses used one last ploy. While the most dramatic and potentially effective of his tactics, it was also the most problematic. From early in the discussion, Nahmanides claimed that belief in rabbinic aggadot was in no sense binding and mandatory, in effect, emasculating the innovative argumentation of Friar Paul. If rabbinic aggadot are not authoritative, then biblical proofs buttressed by rabbinic exegesis and further proofs drawn from freestanding talmudic dicta lose all force. It must be remembered that ultimately both Friar Paul and Nahmanides were addressing a Jewish audience, an audience for which broad disavowal of rabbinic aggadot would be—as it was for Nahmanides himself—difficult to accept. This last argument, directed forcefully at Friar Paul and his associates in the hope that it might discourage them from pursuing this argumentation any further, also had significant but problematic implications for Jewish auditors.

It is interesting that Nahmanides describes his utilization of this tactic as tentative at the outset. When Friar Paul introduced, early on the first day, the *aggadah* concerning the destruction of the Second Temple and the birth of the Messiah, Rabbi Moses depicts the following exchange.

I responded and said: "I do not believe in this *aggadah*, however, it is proof for my views." Then he cried out and said: "Behold he denies their texts." I said: "Truly I do not believe that the Messiah was born on the day of the destruction of the Second Temple. Thus either this *aggadah* is not true or it has another meaning related to the mysteries of the sages. However, I shall accept it literally, as you have suggested, for it affords proof for my case."<sup>[28]</sup>

On the next day of the discussion, perhaps realizing that the challenge was in fact a serious one and that the tactic of negating the authority of *aggadah* might have to be resorted to more extensively, Nahmanides elaborated on this sensitive issue. Moreover, the Christian criticism of Nahmanides' dismissal of authoritative texts necessitated a more nuanced presentation.

Know that we have three categories of texts. One is the Bible, in which all of us believe completely. The second is called Talmud and consists of a commentary on the commandments of the Torah. For in the Torah there are six hundred and thirteen commandments, and there is not one of them which is not explained in the Talmud. We believe in the Talmud

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regarding explanation of the commandments. In addition, we have a third text which is called *midrash*, that is to say sermons, such as when the bishop stands and delivers a sermon and one of the listeners enjoys it and writes it down. He who believes in this text, well and good; he who does not believe in it does no harm. Thus we have sages who wrote that the Messiah will not be born until close to the time of redemption, when he will come to take us out of exile. Therefore I do not believe in this text, where it says that he was born on the day of the destruction of the Second Temple. We also call this text *aggadah*, i.e., tales, that is to say that they are only stories told by one person to another.<sup>[29]</sup>

In this speech, Nahmanides attempts to portray *aggadah* as unrelated to both the Bible and the Talmud. He depicts it as a literature of sermons and tales, copied down rather haphazardly. This is obviously not an accurate portrait of *aggadah*; Rabbi Moses is attempting, after all, to contrast sharply the authority of the Bible and Talmud (really halachah) with the lack of authority of the *aggadah*, all in an effort to undercut the basic approach of Friar Paul. If Nahmanides had been willing to espouse this view wholeheartedly and consistently, Friar Paul's challenge would have been totally repudiated. To the extent that Rabbi Moses was ready to fall back on this tactic, it was the most effective weapon at his disposal. Clearly, however, it was a ploy that was utilized sparingly and hesitantly.

The reaction of the Latin report to this important strategem is revealing.

Although he did not wish to confess the truth unless forced by authoritative texts, when he was unable to explain these authoritative texts, he said publicly that he did not believe those authoritative texts which were adduced against him—although found in ancient and authentic books of the Jews—because they were, he claimed, sermons, in which their teachers often lied for the purpose of exhorting the people. As a result, he denied both the teachers and the sacred writings of the Jews.<sup>[30]</sup>

This description is not far from that of the Hebrew account. It differs only in two major respects. First, it turns Nahmanides' tactic into a ploy of desperation, which it was not in the Hebrew narrative. Second, it differs in its evaluation of the repudiation of *aggadah*. While the denial of aggadic texts was surely a difficult step for Rabbi Moses, it was far from an impossible one. For the Christian reporter, however, steeped in his own tradition's attitudes toward *auctoritates*, it was an unthinkable blasphemy. Nahmanides himself attributes such

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impassioned recoiling to Friar Paul Christian. After describing his first statement of disbelief in an aggadic text, he depicts Friar Paul's violent reaction: "Then he cried out and said, 'Behold he denies their texts.' " It is quite likely that this is an accurate report; the same shock is reflected in the later Latin account of the proceedings. To the medieval Christian mind, particularly to a Dominican mind, such treatment of *auctoritates* was unthinkable.

The issue of Nahmanides' own view of the repudiation of aggadic statements requires a bit more analysis. The general tendency of those who have dealt with the position espoused by Rabbi Moses at Barcelona has been to see his denial of aggadah as a stance taken out of dire necessity and inconsistent with the personal attitudes of a thinker who is, after all, viewed as one of the giants of early kabbalistic speculation. Recently, Bernard Septimus has argued for a far more nuanced view of the Nahmanidean intellectual position in general and his stance toward aggadah in particular.

Another integrating perspective on Nahmanides is to view him as a genius at intellectual crossroads. At Nahmanides' birth, the Tosafists had just completed their revolution of talmudic studies; Kabbalah had recently emerged into the light of history in Provence; and Maimonides, the greatest representative of the Andalusian tradition, was completing his career in exile. All of these traditions converged at the turn of the twelfth century in Catalonia during a period of relative security and prosperity, releasing a remarkable burst of creative energy and versatile achievement. Nahmanides was the leading figure in this little Catalan renaissance.<sup>[31]</sup>

Septimus proceeds from this general assessment to important specific observations with regard to Nahmanides' position on the authority of aggadah.

Although Nahmanides' attitude toward the nonhalachic material in classical rabbinic literature is highly complex and undoubtedly more reverent than Ibn Ezra's, he almost invariably attaches the term "*aggadah*" to those interpretations about which he seems uneasy, which make sense only when interpreted non-literally, or whose seriousness and authority he is calling into question. "*Aggadah*" can even be rejected in favor of kabbalistic interpretation. There is also support in Nahmanides' usage for the linkage of the term "*aggadah*" and popular homiletics—including one striking instance of an original interpretation proposed by Nahmanides "in the manner of *aggadah*." By contrast, a position referred to by Nahmanides as "the words of our masters" (*divrei rabbo-*

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*tenu*) is treated with respect and seriousness of a different order. The term "*rabbotenu*" tends to suggest a somewhat more weighty consensus. Nahmanides' tendency may therefore be akin to those geonic and Andalusian authors who deny absolute authority to individual *aggadot* while recognizing the more binding character of rabbinic teachings that represent a classical consensus. I wish to stress, however, that, though the term "*rabbotenu*" generally accompanies respectful treatment, it does not imply acceptance as a binding last word.<sup>[32]</sup>

The implication of this careful analysis is that Rabbi Moses ben Nahman was not being unfaithful to his general position in taking the stance that he did at Barcelona. Indeed, a closer look at his own statements there corroborates the conclusions of Septimus. Rabbi Moses does introduce into his discussion two identifiable bases on which specific *aggadot* might be repudiated. In his longer statement, delivered at the opening of the second day of discussion, he notes a significant issue with regard to the authority of *aggadah*, namely, the reality of dissonant *aggadot*. Thus, after citing again the rabbinic statement that identifies temporally the destruction of the Temple and the birth of the Messiah, he indicates that "we have sages who wrote that the Messiah will not be born until close to the time of redemption."<sup>[33]</sup> Given the reality of unresolved differences of opinion in the realm of *aggadah*, there is nothing unthinkable in a decision by Nahmanides to reject one aggadic tradition in favor of another diametrically opposed to the first. In his earlier statement on the first day, he opens yet another avenue for repudiating certain *aggadot*, at least, understood simplistically. Again, with regard to the *aggadah* mentioned a moment ago, he says: "Thus either this *aggadah* is not true or it has another meaning related to the mysteries of the sages."<sup>[34]</sup> Thus, Nahmanides does not take a position inimical to

his own views as expressed elsewhere or unthinkable in a traditionalist context. To be sure, put as bluntly as formulated in Barcelona, his view had to encounter some resistance in sectors of the Jewish world (as indeed it did); it was in no sense, however, as unthinkable a position as Friar Paul and some moderns have made it out to be.

Again, in considering this issue, the reality of two disparate audiences noted at the outset must be firmly borne in mind. For his Jewish listeners and readers, Nahmanides was advancing a position with regard to the specific aggadah that juxtaposes the destruction of the Temple with the birth of the Messiah which was perfectly acceptable and respectable. Rejecting such a statement on the grounds that it

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conflicted with other aggadic pronouncements or on the grounds that it must have a hidden meaning is fully consonant with Nahmanides' general stance on aggadah and with a broad traditionalist perspective. The formulation presented in Rabbi Moses's long speech opening the proceedings of the second day is clearly not designed for a Jewish audience. It represents an extreme and somewhat skewed statement—still not blatantly inaccurate—designed to address the Christian listeners and to convince them that the entire new approach proposed by Friar Paul would be utterly unavailing.

In sum, the defense of Rabbi Moses—intended to discourage the Dominicans in their future efforts and to reassure his fellow Jews—was intelligent and diversified. It followed four major directions: (1) intense and specific battling over each and every rabbinic source adduced by Friar Paul; (2) dismissal of the implausible notion that the rabbis held Christological views without understanding their implications; (3) refusal to allow Friar Paul to build his case in the abstract and insistence on testing individual rabbinic texts against the historical figure of Jesus of Nazareth; and (4) repudiation of certain aggadic statements. To these lines of defense explicitly pursued at Barcelona we must add one more, implicit in all likelihood in some of Rabbi Moses's statements during the confrontation and explicit in his Hebrew report on the proceedings. This last tactic was the consistent discrediting of Friar Paul for his general lack of intelligence as well as for his more specific lack of knowledge of the rabbinic literature on the basis of which he was claiming to build his new case.

It is not easy to assess these defensive efforts. If Rabbi Moses had hoped to argue so effectively that the new missionizing argumentation would be thoroughly discredited, then he had to be disappointed. As we have already seen, the new missionizing went on vigorously. However, some of his arguments did result in a rethinking of issues in the Dominican camp and in a refinement of the new approach, as seen strikingly in the *Pugio Fidei*. While certainly not the goal of Rabbi Moses, this refinement is a tribute to his acuity. More important from his own point of view, Nahmanides did crystallize a number of cogent Jewish responses, which could be utilized by Jews everywhere in meeting the new Christian claims. He performed the extremely important task of meeting the new challenge directly, blunting its immediate impact, and setting guidelines for his fellow Jews as they prepared to meet similar assaults.

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Unfortunately, we are not well informed as to subsequent Jewish activities and attitudes. Two major items in this ongoing response to the new missionizing have survived. The first is Nahmanides' own report of the proceedings. This detailed narrative must certainly be seen as an element in the postdebate activity on the part of the Jews. It was composed by Rabbi Moses of Gerona for a number of purposes: first and foremost, to serve as a guide to the proselytizing thrusts of Friar Paul and to provide answers that might be given in the face of these thrusts. Nahmanides was thus compelled to write a highly detailed description. While no such comprehensive manual was required—for the moment—from the Christian side, there was no certainty as to the subsequent targets of Friar Paul's efforts. The Jews of Spain, and indeed of all Europe, had to be informed of the nature of the new challenge and of the lines of defense adumbrated by a distinguished Jewish thinker. That is why the account penned by Rabbi Moses is lengthy and explicit; it is also why the Jewish replies occupy so much more space than the Christian questions. We may surely assume that Friar Paul did not limit himself to the brief statements depicted by Rabbi Moses. As we shall see, Nahmanides' account was utilized by the Jews of this period as precisely the kind of manual its author intended it to be.

There is, at the same time, an interesting note of historical narrative in the account of Nahmanides. Rabbi Moses provides more than simply a manual of Jewish responses. He transforms his report of the confrontation into an absorbing tale replete with villains, heroes, and drama. This transformation had a serious purpose. As we have already noted, part of Nahmanides' technique was to discredit the Christian protagonist as a means of rebutting his arguments. The dramatic quality of the narrative, particularly its vituperative depiction of the Dominican and the contrasting self-portrait of the Jewish spokesman, serves to convey to the Jewish reader the sense that the new Christian argumentation could hardly be taken seriously.

There seems to be, finally, a note of personal apologetics as well. Both the Latin and Hebrew reports mention the rabbi's efforts to halt the proceedings, undertaken on the advice of Christians and Jews alike.<sup>[35]</sup> According to the Latin account, this involved some sharp criticism of Rabbi Moses by his coreligionists; Nahmanides himself omits any reference to such criticism. In any case, the confrontation was a trying experience, and it is not surprising that the protagonist of the

minority would have wished to present the events in such a way as to refute any actual or potential criticism. The personal apologetics of Rabbi Moses are reflected in a number of ways. First, he attempts to portray himself as self-confident and in command throughout. His answers are long and thorough, while the questions posed by his rival are brief and sketchy. Second, while emphasizing throughout that the debate was forced on him, at the same time, he tries to show himself as less than totally passive. We have noted earlier an outstanding example of this in his depiction of the establishment of the agenda. We have suggested that the role imputed by Nahmanides to himself is a purely fanciful one and that even his description of the items on the agenda is distorted in such a way as to mute the evidence of Christian initiative and control. Thus, Rabbi Moses seems, on the one hand, to be presenting himself as disputing against his will and, on the other, to be portraying himself as retaining a measure of active power. Related to this is the ambiguous description of the relationship between King James I and the Jewish spokesman. Nahmanides goes to great lengths to emphasize the positive relationship between himself and the monarch. As has often been noted, he has the king calling a halt to the proceedings after

the fourth day and observing, "I have never seen a man whose case is wrong argue it as well as you have done."<sup>[36]</sup> More striking yet is the Jewish sage's claim that he was unwilling to expound publicly the full anti-Roman (i.e., anti-Christian) content of a particular aggadah but that he did explain it to the king privately.<sup>[37]</sup> This description of a warm and friendly relationship is belied somewhat by Nahmanides' own depiction of the formal behavior of the king, who time after time refuses peremptorily the requests of the rabbi. Again, this ambiguity seems to flow from Rabbi Moses's desire to paint himself as both reluctant and aggressive, forced to debate against his will but enjoying the good graces of his sovereign.

There are thus both public and private purposes to the composition of Nahmanides' report. One further source reveals that this Hebrew record did, in fact, serve as the kind of manual its author had intended. Subsequent to his preaching efforts in Spain, Friar Paul Christian, in the late 1260s, turned his attention to the realm of King Louis IX of France. Arriving during the monarch's preparations for his second and final crusading venture, Friar Paul took full advantage of the heightened fervor of the royal court to press a number of his programs, in particular, his missionizing campaign. Chance survival of an interesting Hebrew document shows the Jews of northern France

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benefitting from the experience and narrative of Rabbi Moses ben Nahman. The Hebrew document introduces itself as follows:

Be painstaking in the study of Torah, and this is what you should respond to the unbeliever. Behold now, in the year 1269, an apostate from Montpellier has arrived, revealing the secrets of the Torah and reviling the *aggadot* of our Talmud. He had already undertaken a debate with Rabbi Moses ben Nahman before the King of Aragon in Barcelona.<sup>[38]</sup>

Following this introduction, there is a résumé of Rabbi Moses' report, giving Friar Paul's arguments and Nahmanides' responses. The northern French Jew who fashioned this résumé in effect urged his fellow Jews to acquaint themselves with these claims and counterclaims so as to prepare themselves for the anticipated sermons of Friar Paul. Having said this, we must further observe that this Jewish leader was superficial in his reading of Nahmanides' text. All he did was copy a series of arguments and counterarguments. There is, for example, no clear understanding of Friar Paul's strategem of deliberate abstraction and thus no full appreciation of Rabbi Moses's insistence on introducing Jesus of Nazareth at every turn. Yet more interesting is the refusal of this northern French Jew to follow Nahmanides' lead in disclaiming the authority of aggadic texts. At no point in the résumé is this tactic mentioned or recommended.<sup>[39]</sup> Divergences notwithstanding, it is clear that Nahmanides' account was in fact widely known and that it did serve as a manual for rebutting the contentions of Friar Paul. The Jews who read his report came to share his view that the challenge posed by the formerly Jewish Dominican preacher was a formidable one; they also shared his sense that the lines of defense adumbrated at Barcelona had proven to be effective and could be usefully imitated by other Jews subjected to the new missionizing argumentation.<sup>[40]</sup>

### Rabbi Mordechai ben Joseph

While the response of Rabbi Moses ben Nahman constitutes our fullest reflection of the Jewish reactions to the new missionizing argumentation mounted by Friar Paul Christian, we do possess one

more major source that is addressed directly to this new proselytizing thrust. Under very trying circumstances, Rabbi Mordechai ben Joseph of Avignon set himself the goal of rebutting the new missionizing argumentation in a lengthy composition that he entitled *Mahazik<sup>[41]</sup> Emunah* (The Reinforcer of Faith).<sup>[41]</sup>

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In the opening pages of the extant manuscript, which are unfortunately badly damaged and most difficult to decipher, Rabbi Mordechai describes the conditions under which he set about his task, conditions of strict house arrest.

They indicated to us the fate of all those sequestered. This was to be the punishment: Anyone who exited through the door of his house would bear responsibility for his fate. He [antecedent unclear] commanded to close up some of the entrances with plaster and stone and that some of them be equipped with iron rods. But God intervened and their counsel was foiled. "Their eyes are besmeared, and they see not; their minds, and they cannot think."<sup>[42]</sup> The entrances were opened wide. When we saw our loved ones, we found solace and rest. While I remained in my house in sadness, where I accepted suffering gladly, God in his loving-kindness invigorated my spirits. "The spirit of God drove me on."<sup>[43]</sup> I completed a book and corrected it, bringing it to fruition. I called it *Mahazik<sup>[43]</sup>Emunah*, available to those who know wisdom, for [in it] I explained secret things and I divided it into thirteen chapters.<sup>[44]</sup>

The precise circumstances that gave rise to this punishment are not clear. What is important is the result—a book intended to buttress the beliefs of Rabbi Mordechai's contemporaries.

Friar Paul is mentioned in the *Mahazik<sup>[44]</sup>Emunah*, but, again unfortunately, those pages that explain the intellectual origins of the work are now illegible. A look at the lengthy table of contents supplied by the author will indicate clearly the mid-thirteenth-century backdrop of the book and the immediate influence of the new missionizing argumentation developed by Friar Paul.

The first chapter is intended to prove that three exiles were announced to Israel between the dissected pieces [a reference to the divine promise delivered in Genesis 15:13–16 and 18–21, between the dissected pieces of four animals], and one is the exile in which we find ourselves today. I intend to prove that, because an edict was decreed against us, this is the longest exile and we still remain in it, dispersed among the nations. Therefore the Messiah has not come to gather his dispersed.

The second chapter is intended to prove that it was decreed that this exile be longer than the other exiles. Thus it is no surprise that the Messiah tarries, for his time has not yet come. At the appointed end he will come to gather his dispersed at the end of days, according to the words of the prophets.

The third chapter is intended to prove and to explain the length of [this] exile, that it is properly the longest of all. When their Messiah ap-

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peared, Israel had not yet gone into exile; thus it is clear that the Messiah has not come. Thus it has been decreed, and there is a fixed end to our exile.

The fourth chapter is intended to prove that, because of repentance, the Creator will advance the time of redemption. The intention was to strengthen the hearts of people so that they not despair as a result of the length of exile and so that they not say that their hope has been lost and so that they repent. All this proves that the Messiah has not come. We further proved in this chapter that, at the end, Israel will be saved even without repentance. We are in exile; therefore obviously the end has not yet arrived and the Messiah has not yet come.

The fifth chapter is intended to prove that we are in exile only for annulment of the commandments written in the Torah. I have done so in order to obviate the belief of those who say that we are in exile for the sin related to their Messiah. . .<sup>[45]</sup>

The sixth chapter indicates that the Messiah whom all the prophets predicted is human and not divine. It is intended to obviate that belief which says that the Messiah has come and is divine and human, taking on flesh and blood. If the matter is not so, as I prove in this chapter, then matters are not as they say and the Messiah has not come. For they also acknowledge that all the prophets predicted the Messiah.

The seventh chapter is intended to prove that the Messiah has not come. This chapter is intended to prove the essential issue, that the predictions for the future and the signs and the wonders required for that time, like the matter of Gog and Magog and the matter of . . .<sup>[46]</sup> and many wonders, have not been realized. Thus the Messiah has not yet come.

The eighth chapter is intended to prove if the Messiah has been born or is yet to be born. This chapter as well is intended to prove that he has not come. For, if he has been born, then our sages said that he was born on the day of the destruction [of the Second Temple], but according to their view he was born long before the destruction [of the Second Temple]. But if he is yet to be born, then how could he come prior to being born?

The ninth chapter is intended to prove that two Messiahs will come at the end of days, the Messiah son of Joseph and the Messiah son of David. The prophets foretold both of them. They [the Christians] say that their Messiah came by himself before the destruction [of the Second Temple]. Therefore the prediction of the prophets was not realized and their vision not fulfilled. With regard to the coming of the Messiahs it [the vision of the prophets] was not fulfilled; it shall, however, be fulfilled at the time of the end, for the prophets neither lie nor deceive.

The tenth chapter is intended to prove that the Messiah whom the prophets predicted will come to gather Israel. . . .<sup>[47]</sup> Thus the Messiah

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should have come to gather them from the four corners of the earth. But if you say that [it—i.e., the prophecies] refers to those remaining in Babylonia and to the ten tribes, indeed he [Jesus] did not gather them and they remain in exile. Thus the Messiah has not come. He will come at the end of days to gather them.

The eleventh chapter [is intended] to prove the honor of Israel, the lengthening of days, and the strengthening of faith during the days of the Messiah. These things did not happen during the days of their Messiah. There was no honor for Israel or lengthening of days—indeed even today they die after brief days as do we. Thus the Messiah about whom the prophets predicted that there would develop in his days honor for Israel and strengthening of faith and lengthening of days has not yet come. When he does come, all these predictions and consolations will be realized.

The twelfth chapter is intended to prove the downfall and undoing during the days of the Messiah of the nations that exiled us and subjugated us in exile. Thus surely the Messiah has not yet come. . . .

The thirteenth chapter is intended to prove that the world will continue to proceed in its accustomed pattern during the days of the Messiah. The worship service and the commandments will not be annulled during the days of the Messiah. It is known that their Messiah innovated a new religion for himself and claimed that the commandments—which are eternal statutes—were annulled with the coming of their Messiah and that they were no longer required to offer sacrifices and that there would no longer be prophets, for prophecy has been sealed with his coming. We prove in this chapter with clear proofs that it is not as they claim. The Torah and the commandments will remain in force and be everlasting. Thus it was not the Messiah that came; rather he is yet to come, with the aid of God. May our eyes see this and may our hearts be gladdened; in his salvation our souls will rejoice. Our King will crown us speedily and shortly. Amen.<sup>[48]</sup>

Reflections of the innovative mid-thirteenth-century missionizing argumentation abound. There is, in particular, ample evidence of Rabbi Mordechai's awareness of the thrusts of Friar Paul Christian. The case made by Friar Paul at Barcelona revolved around four key assertions: (1) the Messiah has already come; (2) the Messiah was intended to be both divine and human; (3) the Messiah was intended to suffer and be killed for the salvation of mankind; and (4) the laws and ceremonials were intended to cease after the advent of the Messiah. Rabbi Mordechai reacts to three of these four items. The first—

that the Messiah has already come—is clearly the heart of the matter for him. He addresses this issue in almost every chapter (all except chap-

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ter 5); when he discusses the coming of the Messiah directly in chapter seven, he calls this "the essential issue." The formulation of chapter eight—whether the Messiah has yet been born or is eventually to be born—clearly recalls the discussion of this issue at Barcelona, based on the rabbinic materials that speak of the birth of the Messiah as already having taken place, for example, at the time of the destruction of the Second Temple. In chapter eight, Rabbi Mordechai makes reference to precisely those same rabbinic sources. Chapter six, which argues that the Messiah was intended to be human and not divine, clearly addresses the second item on the Barcelona agenda. The third agenda item is not directly confronted. However, the fourth item, which was not broached at Barcelona, is the subject of the thirteenth and last chapter. Thus, the essential content of the argumentation, the use of rabbinic materials, and discussion of many of the sources used at Barcelona all indicate awareness of the new missionizing argumentation of Friar Paul.

In addition to these general considerations, there is direct reference to Friar Paul and his arguments in the closing chapter of the *Mahazik Emunah*. There, Rabbi Mordechai takes up the notion of the annulment of the commandments during the days of the Messiah. In the course of this discussion, he adduces two rabbinic texts that speak of the disappearance of most prayers and sacrifices during the days of the Messiah and attempts to show that these texts reflect the special circumstances of messianic times—the lack of this-worldly cares and sinning—and do not bespeak such an annulment. To illustrate the closeness that will exist between God and humanity at that time, he adduces an aggadah concerning God and the righteous.

It is written: "I shall walk in your midst."<sup>[49]</sup> This is analogous to a king who went out to walk with his beloved associates in an orchard. The associate was frightened of him. The superior said to him: "Why are you frightened of me? I am akin to you." Likewise the Holy One will in the future stroll with the righteous in paradise. When the righteous see him, they will recoil from him. Then the Holy One will say to them: "Why do you recoil from me? Behold I am akin to you."<sup>[50]</sup>

Rabbi Mordechai goes to great lengths to explain this aggadah as referring to the relationship between God and the righteous at the end of days and concludes this digressive explanation with the following:

I dealt at length with this *aggadah* because that certain fellow [ha-ish ha-yadu'a] distorted the meaning of this *aggadah*. He said that "you are akin

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to him" is to be taken to mean that the Messiah was to be divine and human.<sup>[51]</sup>

On the last day of the Barcelona proceedings, Friar Paul had utilized precisely this aggadah in exactly the manner suggested by Rabbi Mordechai. "That certain fellow" surely is a discreet reference to Friar Paul

and establishes even more specifically the relation of the *Mahazik Emunah* to his innovative argumentation.<sup>[52]</sup>

Rabbi Mordechai's treatment of this new missionizing argumentation is both less and more useful than that afforded by the lengthy narrative report of Rabbi Moses ben Nahman. It is less useful in that Rabbi Mordechai is not constrained, as was Nahmanides, to reply directly to the claims of Friar Paul. There is, as a result, a looseness about the arguments of Rabbi Mordechai that we did not encounter in Nahmanides' narrative. Yet, precisely because of this, the *Mahazik Emunah* is ultimately even more interesting. If our essential concern is to fathom the Jewish response to the new argumentation, then the lack of constraint and the truly internal Jewish focus of Rabbi Mordechai's opus make it valuable. In this work, we have a Jewish leader addressing his fellow Jews in the terms that he believes will be most meaningful to them. Thus, Rabbi Mordechai affords us an opportunity to understand more fully from within the directions of Jewish reaction to the new thrusts.

In analyzing the claims of Rabbi Mordechai, let us begin with the bases of argumentation. Herein, of course, lay the essential innovation of Friar Paul's approach, his utilization of rabbinic exegesis of the Bible and of freestanding rabbinic dicta. Rabbi Mordechai is obviously aware of this important innovation, yet he clearly is not overwhelmed by it. While he makes repeated reference to rabbinic sources, these references take second place both quantitatively and qualitatively to his use of biblical text. Throughout his book, he places the heaviest emphasis on what he sees as the ultimate source of religious truth, God's revelation as crystallized in the Bible. Thus, the essence of his argument is the reassuring of his fellow-Jews that the entire weight of divinely revealed truth supports their tradition. Rabbinic material is important and interesting, but random rabbinic texts cannot overturn the essential truths reflected, according to Rabbi Mordechai, at every turn in the biblical record of revelation. In this sense, then, a look at the internal Jewish responses to Friar Paul's new tactic shows it to be less meaningful than he would have wished. When all was said

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and done, much of Jewish thinking returned to traditionally biblically based rebuttals of Christian claims.

When we turn our attention away from the bases of argumentation to the substance of that argumentation, we are immediately struck by the concentration on the issue of whether the Messiah has already come. While only one chapter addresses itself centrally to this issue, eleven others make reference to it. In discussing the Barcelona agenda, we already hypothesized that the first item was actually the key to all the rest, and indeed the *Mahazik Emunah* substantiates that hypothesis. It is obviously Rabbi Mordechai's intention to prove and re-prove and prove again that the Messiah has not yet come. That issue is the linchpin. If the Christians could prove that assertion, then truth would lay with them; if Jews could prove their view that the Messiah has not yet come, then their faith would be substantiated. This is not to negate the significance of other issues. We have already suggested that there was value for the Christian camp in massing numerous arguments simultaneously; for the Jews, likewise, the more rebuttals that could be marshaled, the better. The *Mahazik Emunah*, however, does help us identify the heart of the debate. Let us gain some sense of the style of Rabbi Mordechai's argumentation by quoting some of chapter 7, in which he argues directly that the Messiah has not yet come.

The seventh chapter is intended to prove that the Messiah whom all the prophets predicted that he would come to gather the dispersed of Israel has not yet come. . . .

First I shall bring proof from the Torah that the Messiah has not come, for the Creator promised us full redemption in the future. For in the covenant struck between the dissected pieces it is written: "To your offspring I assign this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates."<sup>[53]</sup> He then counted ten nations, citing first the Kenites, the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites. Now these three were not given to Israel during the days of Moses, may he rest in peace, or during the days of Joshua or during the days of David. Now it is impossible to say that there was not sufficient merit to warrant disinheriting them and fulfilling the promise, for with this covenant and oath there were no conditions, as we explained in the first chapter.

But in truth there are destined to be realized inevitably during the days of the Messiah many [biblical] statements regarding the future, such as the [statement regarding] the cities of refuge. . . . It is said: "And when the Lord your God enlarges your territory, [as he swore to your fathers,

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and gives you all the land that he promised to give your fathers—if you faithfully observe all this instruction that I enjoin upon you this day, to love the Lord your God and to walk in his ways at all times—] then you shall add three more towns to those three [the three already set aside as cities of refuge]."<sup>[54]</sup> This never took place. It is further said in the prophecy of Isaiah: "In the days to come, the mount of the Lord's house shall stand firm above the mountains and tower above the hills; And all the nations shall gaze upon it with joy."<sup>[55]</sup> This is not now the case. All the nations do not . . .<sup>[56]</sup> upon it, and it does not tower above the hills, for subsequent to their Messiah Jerusalem was conquered by the Muslims. Further: "For instruction shall come forth from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."<sup>[57]</sup> We do not see now that people go to Jerusalem to seek wisdom, for it is destroyed and desolate.

It is further said: "In that day, the Lord will apply his hand again to redeeming the other part of his people from Assyria, as also from Babylonia and from Assyria and from Egypt."<sup>[58]</sup> Who is it that redeemed [them] from Babylonia and the other lands and will apply this hand again to gather them from the ends of the earth and collect Judah and Israel from the four corners of the world? Who redeemed them the first time and will redeem them a second time? Only the Lord, may he be blessed, for their Messiah did not yet exist [at the time of the first ingathering]. Indeed those scattered about to the four winds are Israel and Judah. Isaiah further says: "Strengthen the hands that are slack; make firm the tottering knees."<sup>[59]</sup> Whose hands are slack in exile and whose knees tottering? Only Israel. Now at the end of this chapter he says: "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come with shouting to Zion."<sup>[60]</sup>

He [Isaiah] says: "Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and declare to her that her term of service is over, that her iniquity is expiated; for she has received at the hand of the Lord double for all her sins."<sup>[61]</sup> Who is it that received at the hand of the Lord double for all her sins but Israel. He further says: "He gives strength to the weary, fresh vigor to the spent."<sup>[62]</sup> Who is weary and spent in exile but us. Concerning whom is it said: "Those who trust in the Lord shall renew their strength."<sup>[63]</sup> Surely the weak. However,

those who today enjoy power shall be reversed and become weak. Likewise all these sections are straightforward, speaking only about those who live today under the oppression of exile.

It says in the Torah that during the days of the Messiah there will be "peace in the land and you shall lie down untroubled by anyone."<sup>[64]</sup> Likewise Isaiah says: "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard lie down with the kid; [the calf, the beast of prey, and the fatling together, with a little boy to herd them.] The cow and the bear shall graze, [their young shall lie down together; and the lion, like the ox, shall eat straw.] A babe shall play over a viper's hole, [and an infant pass his hand over an adder's den.]"<sup>[65]</sup> Where have we found such peace during the days of their

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Messiah? Indeed it was the opposite, for dissension multiplied on the earth, along with dissidence and heresy.<sup>[66]</sup>

I have quoted this material at length to give the flavor of Rabbi Mordechai's argumentation. The heavy reliance on direct biblical text is manifest. Indeed, as we read this section, there is an obvious echo of Nahmanides' independent speech on the second day of the Barcelona proceedings. Here, as there, the basic stance is that the entire picture of messianic days as presented throughout the Scriptures has not been yet realized and thus the suggestion that the Messiah has already come is patently untrue. There is little sophistication about this argument, but it is clearly a highly meaningful one to such Jewish leaders as Rabbi Moses ben Nahman and Rabbi Mordechai ben Joseph. In this sense, the increasingly adroit argumentation mounted by Friar Paul proved of limited effectiveness. The central Jewish response elaborated for internal Jewish usage is that the overwhelming weight of biblical truth clearly and simply repudiates the new (as well as old) Christian claims.

While his case against the prior coming of the Messiah constitutes the essence of Rabbi Mordechai's rebuttal of the new missionizing thrusts, his book also affords some sense of the fourth agenda item at Barcelona, the issue of the annulment of Jewish law. Because that issue was never debated by Friar Paul and Rabbi Moses, we were previously unable to identify the force of this fourth issue. Since Rabbi Mordechai devotes the final chapter of the *Mahazik Emunah* to it, he provides us with a sense of both the Christian argument and the Jewish counterargument.

The thirteenth chapter [is intended] to prove that the commandments and sacrifices are not annulled during the days of the Messiah.

The Lord wished to provide Israel with merit, therefore he granted them extensively Torah and commandments. Indeed the commandments were given for the well-being of the universe, to distance [humanity] from murder and adultery and robbery. Likewise the commandments rooted in obedience [as opposed to those rooted in rational considerations] are like steps intended for the ascent to the house of God. All the days of the [existence of the] world mankind must occupy itself with maintenance of the universe and must distance itself from ugliness and. . .<sup>[67]</sup>

The sages of the Talmud said that the only difference between the present world and the days of the Messiah is [Israel's] subjugation by the nations. During the days of Hezekiah, who was a righteous king, called "the eternal father, a peaceable ruler,"<sup>[68]</sup> they [the Jews] held fast to the

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commandments more than in prior generations, as is said: "They searched from Dan to Beersheba and could not find an infant not expert in [the laws of] impurity and purity."<sup>[69]</sup> Likewise during the days of the Messiah, when he comes, we believe that they [Jews] will still be expert in [the laws of] impurity and purity, in the Torah and the commandments. Indeed when the Torah was given at Sinai, it was not given for a limited time period. Just as the commandments are dependent upon fear of the Lord, so too will they never be annulled—such as "I am the Lord your God";<sup>[70]</sup> "You shall have no other gods beside me";<sup>[71]</sup> "You must fear the Lord your God";<sup>[72]</sup> —and such as "You shall not swear falsely by my

name";<sup>[73]</sup> "You shall not revile God";<sup>[74]</sup> "You shall love the Lord your God."<sup>[75]</sup> All these commandments written in the Torah brook no distinctions and will never be annulled. Regarding that which is said in the *aggadah*: "Rabbi Yohanan [said] in the name of Rabbi Menahem of Galya: 'In the future all the prayers will be annulled, but prayers of thanksgiving will never be annulled.'<sup>[76]</sup> Likewise regarding that which he said in a different *aggadah*: "In the future all the sacrifices [will be annulled] except for the thanksgiving offering."<sup>[77]</sup> He [Rabbi Menahem] intended by [the term] "in the future" the world to come. For there are two time periods: first the days of the Messiah, when they [the Jews] will remain for many years in the land of Israel and offer sacrifices, and subsequently there will be the world to come, when the righteous shall luxuriate in Eden and receive their reward. Then there will take place a different revival of the dead, some to receive reward and some to be punished. Regarding that time period, the prophet said: "Many of those that sleep in the dust [of the earth] will awake, some to eternal life, others to [reproaches, to] everlasting abhorrence."<sup>[78]</sup> At that time, there will no longer be an evil inclination in the world, as Rabbi Joshua ben Levi said in Tractate Avodah Zarah: "In the future he [God] will bring the evil inclination and slaughter it before the righteous."<sup>[79]</sup> Therefore they will not need to be aware of foulness and murder and robbery. Inevitably then all the sacrifices will be annulled, except for the sacrifice of thanksgiving. That is to say that they will give thanks to the Holy One, blessed be he, and will luxuriate with him in Eden. Alternatively we can explain this [the statements of Rabbi Menahem] even during the days of the Messiah. That is to say that the prayers will be annulled because they will no longer need to request this-worldly necessities, for the world will be bounteous all the days, without effort and work. They will only require [prayers of] praise and thanksgiving to God. Likewise there will be no sinners who will require sacrifices for sin and transgression, as is written: "Sinners will disappear from the earth."<sup>[80][81]</sup>

I shall return to my proofs that all the commandments will be in force during the days of the Messiah. The sages of the Talmud are divided in

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Tractate Berachot with regard to recollection of the exodus from Egypt during the days of the Messiah, specifically Ben Zoma and the sages. They say there: "So that you may remember the day of your departure from the land of Egypt as long as you live."<sup>[82]</sup> But are we to remember the exodus from Egypt during the days of the Messiah? But it has already been said: 'Assuredly, a time is coming—declares the Lord—when it shall no longer be said, "As the Lord lives who brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt," but rather, "As the Lord lives who brought the Israelites out of the northland."<sup>[83]</sup> It seems that it was Ben Zoma's view that we will not remember the exodus from Egypt during the days of the Messiah, and this is a positive commandment. What they were saying to us is not that [remembrance of] the exodus from Egypt would be abrogated, meaning that it would not be annulled during the days of the Messiah, but rather that [remembrance of release from] the domination of the nations would be primary and [remembrance of] the exodus from Egypt would be secondary. Similarly one finds: "You shall be called Jacob no more, but Israel shall be your name."<sup>[84]</sup> [This does] not [mean] that the name Jacob is abrogated, but rather that Israel is primary and Jacob secondary.<sup>[85]</sup>

This passage shows us the essential techniques used by Rabbi Mordechai. He mounts three independent positive arguments for the continued relevance of the commandments in messianic times: one from reasonable consideration of the functions of the commandments, one based on rabbinic sources, and one (the most important) rooted in biblical revelation. Having established these, he proceeds to cite some of the recent arguments mounted on the basis of rabbinic literature and to rebut them. In this case, since we lacked evidence of the nature of Friar Paul's rabbinically derived case against the observance of the commandments, Rabbi Mordechai's material serves to fill in the lacunae. He shows us a number of rabbinic sources utilized by Friar Paul and then submits these sources to his own analysis.

This passage alerts us to one last, and very important, tendency of Rabbi Mordechai's, a tendency that pervades the entire work. While there is surely much that is defensive in his approach, there is also a positive line of argumentation throughout. Put another way, it was not enough for Rabbi Mordechai to simply rebut Friar Paul's contentions; he was anxious to construct an independently positive statement of Jewish views as well. We have just seen him do this with respect to the issue of Jewish law. This same dual thrust typifies his work in its entirety. Let us look again at the table of contents. We see

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throughout a consistent thread of rebuttal of Friar Paul. (1) The Messiah has not yet come. (2) The Messiah was not intended to be divine and human. (3) Even when the Messiah does appear, the

commandments will not be annulled. All of this is skillfully interwoven, however, in a rich positive tapestry that seeks to reassure the Jewish reader that God's broad plan is still in effect and still includes ultimate redemption of the Jewish people. (1) God intended three exiles for his people. (2) The third exile was intended to be the longest. (3) Redemption is inevitable. (4) The Messiah has not yet come. (5) When he does come, the Messiah will redeem all of Israel and will properly punish those who mistreated them during their subjugation. (6) Even at that point, the commandments will retain their eternal validity. Rabbi Mordechai clearly felt that his responsibility extended beyond rebuttal; he also felt required to reassure through the construction of a positive portrayal of the present and the future. Friar Paul's case of the prior advent of the Messiah implied an obvious negative corollary for Jewish fate. If the Messiah had already come and had not redeemed them, then the Jews were surely consigned to unremitting exile and degradation. Rabbi Mordechai was as sensitive to this negative corollary as he was to the original Christian claim of the prior advent of the Messiah. Addressing his fellow Jews directly, he was in a position to proceed beyond the circumscribed parameters of Rabbi Moses ben Nahman, and it is in this sense, therefore, that his work gives us even better insight into the defensive efforts on the part of the Jewish leadership of the mid-thirteenth century, efforts that included continual reassurance in the face of the new onslaught. Not only were the Christians wrong in their new thrusts but the old promises by which the Jews had long lived and in which they had long had confidence remained in force and augured better days to come.

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## Early Responses

The new missionizing argumentation presented a serious challenge. Given the coercion exercised, there was no way for the Jews to avoid hearing the innovative argumentation. As suggested earlier, these new approaches had many advantages, intellectual, psychological, and tactical. Jewish leadership had to concern itself with the development of effective counterargumentation that would blunt any potentially harmful impact the new claims might have.

The new-style sally reflected in the *Milhemet<sup>14</sup>Mizvah<sup>15</sup>* was not a serious one, and the Jewish response need not detain us. The rabbinic text used in Rabbi Isaac ben Yedaiah's *Commentary on the Aggadot of the Talmud* was far more significant and, as we have seen, was used in the Barcelona confrontation by Friar Paul. Rabbi Isaac's response shows us Jewish attempts to grapple with the new Christian thrusts at an early stage; it is lengthy and addresses a number of issues. First, he clarifies the Jewish conception of the Messiah, which is, he insists, radically different from that of the Christians.

We anticipate and believe in a King Messiah who will arise, one man among his people, imbued with divine spirit. He will rouse himself to govern his people and to serve as king over them and, anointed with oil, to extricate them from the travails of their subjugation. That king will be a king of flesh and blood, a pious and upright man, and his God will assist him in extricating the people from the burden of rulers who oppress them. . . . That king will arise from the midst of his brothers, as did Saul and David and Solomon his son, the kings who ruled as divine emissaries and whom God had chosen for that purpose and who were anointed with oil by the prophet. Thus will be the King Messiah. . . .

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That king whom the prophets promised has not yet come, but he will in the future come. If the sounds of his chariot have tarried to this point, nonetheless his time is near and he will surely come. He will not tarry.<sup>[1]</sup>

Rabbi Isaac argues that the effort to see in the rabbinic statement proof of Jesus is hopelessly misguided, for the rabbis were talking about a completely different messianic figure. Nothing can be gleaned here to support Christian truth.

The claim that the rabbinic text could not reflect the Christian messiah still left the problem of the text itself, and Rabbi Isaac explains its meaning as well.

With regard to your question as to what [the rabbis] of blessed memory came to teach us by saying that he was created in their days, know you, who study and scrutinize these words of theirs simplemindedly, that they of blessed memory followed, in these words of theirs, in the paths of the prophets who speak of something which will happen in the future in the language of the past. Since they saw in prophetic vision that which was to occur in the future, they spoke about it in the past tense and testified firmly that it had happened, to teach the certainty of his [God's] words—may he be blessed—and his positive promise that can never change and his beneficent message that will not be altered. The sages of the Talmud looked back to Moses and the rest of the prophets—prophets of truth—and said here that the Messiah had been created, since the people was certain in the Lord that a new king would arise for them.<sup>[2]</sup>

Thus Rabbi Isaac finds the Christian reading of the text impossible and proposes a simpler Jewish reading, a projection of future events in the language of the past, that he claims is a venerable and accepted style of literary presentation.

There is one more point in Rabbi Isaac's lengthy rebuttal which deserves attention. It is a point of view that we have already encountered in the *Milbemet<sup>[3]</sup>Mizvah<sup>[4]</sup>* and will encounter again in Nahmanides' responses in Barcelona.

If it is as you say—that our Messiah has come some time ago and went to Rome, where he established for himself a residence and a walled city—then how could the Jews of that generation not believe Elijah who came to inform them about him. Indeed he was their prophet when he was among the living and appeared to them now to inform them that he [the Messiah] had come to save their lost souls. If they would listen to him,

then on that very day he [the Messiah] would come; he would not tarry if they would listen to his voice and believe in the Trinity. He would gather up their exiled, and the children would return to their borders. How could the sages of that generation not believe the faith of the Christians through the prophet who came from the divine to teach them that this was the Messiah of the Lord who had been caught up in their degradation and who would redeem Israel and never know death?<sup>[5]</sup>

Thus, in addition to the earlier claim of the impropriety of reading Christian conceptions into Jewish sources, Rabbi Isaac further argues the implausibility of the Christian reading of the text. If the Christian reading were accepted, then the Jewish failure to heed the message contained in such a text is beyond understanding. While a cogent response, this early counterargument was a dangerous one, allowing for Christian counter-counterclaims of Jewish blindness and malevolence in misunderstanding and rejecting divinely sent messages both prophetic and rabbinic.

In any case, Rabbi Isaac affords us a fine sense of early Jewish response to the new argumentation. Neither the thrusts nor the parries are yet as sharp as they will eventually be. Both sides still had to learn its full implications.

## Rabbi Moses ben Nahman

As we have already seen, the Barcelona disputation of 1263 represented an effort on the part of the Christian initiators of that confrontation to test the new missionizing tactics developed by Friar Paul Christian. As a result, the Jewish leadership summoned by the king of Aragon to respond to the arguments of Friar Paul bore heavy responsibility for formulating and disseminating the requisite Jewish responses. The key figure, apparently singled out by the Jews themselves, was the venerable rabbi of Gerona, Moses ben Nahman. The technique of choosing one respected figure to respond was a calculated risk. The disadvantage was the inherent limitations in one man's

capacity. Ranged against this consideration was the advantage that flowed from a unified, consistent, and coherent response to the new assault. Given the later experience at Tortosa, where a projected group response often degenerated into internal disagreements and backbiting,<sup>[4]</sup> the choice at Barcelona was probably a good one. To be sure, Rabbi Moses' stature may have made the decision relatively easy.

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By 1263, Rabbi Moses was already in his late sixties and had achieved unusual eminence among his coreligionists. Scholars of the past few decades have begun to investigate in depth his diversified oeuvre and to suggest that he was one of the most creative figures in medieval Jewish life.<sup>[5]</sup> In introducing a volume of studies devoted to aspects of Nahmanides' wide-ranging achievement, Isadore Twersky asserts:

We may, with care and precision, with complete semantic accountability, affirm that Ramban was truly versatile, original, and profound. His creative contributions to the multiple disciplines which molded Judaism and through which the Jewish genius expressed itself were innovative and substantive, intense and penetrating. Furthermore, his massive and original literary oeuvre was historically influential and vibrant; his great song continued to reverberate through the ages. Nahmanides is not merely of arcane or antiquarian significance—an interesting figure whose works should be salvaged and studied in compliance with the rules of the scholarly game; he appears on the historical scene as a towering figure whose resplendent multidimensional achievement was formative and remained resonant—constantly relevant, exciting and stimulating, eliciting admiration and amplification and, of course, dissent and qualification. His works were always alive and influential.<sup>[6]</sup>

Beyond his sheer intellectual power, Rabbi Moses offered additional virtues to his fellow Jews at this critical juncture. A number of decades earlier, during a period of concern over the writings of Rabbi Moses ben Maimon (a concern that laid bare a number of fundamental tensions in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Jewish life), Rabbi Moses ben Nahman had played an important conciliatory role.<sup>[7]</sup> Thus, in 1263, he had already established his credentials as a man of intellectual ability and social sensitivity. Both qualities were essential for Jewish success at Barcelona. In addition, if we are to believe Nahmanides himself, he already enjoyed the favor of the King of Aragon.

Rabbi Moses bore the heavy responsibility of adequately formulating a public Jewish response to the new missionizing arguments of Friar Paul. He had to address simultaneously two different audiences—Friar Paul and the Dominicans and (more important) his Jewish confreres. Nahmanides was attempting to persuade Friar Paul and the Dominicans of the fundamental flaws in their new missionizing argumentation, hoping to convince them to abandon it. Such success would represent optimal Jewish achievement under the trying cir-

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cumstances of 1263. His second goal was to prove to his fellow Jews that the new missionizing arguments were as unconvincing as the old. In pursuing this second objective, Rabbi Moses had to respond first to the substance of the new argumentation and find adequate counterthrusts. At the same time, he also indulged—at least in his written report—in an ad hominem assault on Friar Paul Christian, hoping to show his Jewish audience that their adversary was unlettered and unskilled and thus, by implication, his arguments were void of significance. It seems doubtful that Rabbi Moses could have denigrated Friar Paul in the public manner that he reports; nonetheless, this was an important element in his overall strategy.

The main lines of Nahmanides' argumentation took several directions. The most fundamental but least efficient tactic was to contest the interpretation of individual rabbinic passages advanced by Friar Paul. Let us note two examples of such argumentation.

Friar Paul's opening gambit was to cite the traditional Genesis 49:10 and to claim that the disappearance of Jewish political authority clearly meant that the Messiah foretold in Jacob's utterance had already come. Nahmanides' predictable response was to argue that Jacob's statement focused on the promise of eventual rule to be vested in the tribe of Judah. The verse in no way, according to Rabbi Moses, obviated the suspension of Judah's rule for periods of time, and indeed such suspensions of Judean rule had already taken place prior to early Christianity. Despite all suspensions, Jacob's prophecy indicated that rule would eventually be vested in the tribe of Judah. All of this was standard. The novelty of Friar Paul's approach lay in his next move, in which he argued, on the basis of rabbinic tradition, that no such suspension had ever taken place in early Jewish history and thus the current and obvious lack of Jewish political authority can only mean that the Messiah has come. To prove this contention, Friar Paul adduced the exegesis on Genesis 49:10 found in the Babylonian Talmud. According to this rabbinic statement, the scepter of the verse refers to the exilarchs of Babylonia and the legislator to the patriarchs of Palestine. Thus, concludes Friar Paul, rabbinic understanding of the verse shows unbroken political authority from early Israelite history on, with a break occurring only once and clearly associated with the advent of the Messiah. Rabbi Moses contends in response that Friar Paul has simply not understood the meaning of the talmudic passage.

I shall inform you that the intention of the rabbis of blessed memory was never to explain the verse except in terms of actual kingship. However,

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you fail to understand law and *halachah*, [comprehending] only a bit of the *aggadot* with which you have become familiar. This matter which the sages mentioned relates to the fact that, in narrowly legal terms, no one should judge a case by himself and be free of liability, unless he received authorization from the patriarch who is like a king. They said that, during the time of exile, since there are those who are of the seed of the monarchy and who enjoy some authority from gentile kings, like the exilarchs in Babylonia and the patriarchs in Palestine, they have the right to confer authorization. This practice was in force for the sages of the Talmud for more than four hundred years subsequent to Jesus. But it was not the sense of the sages of the Talmud that [this was a reference to] the seed of the scepter and legislator which are from Judah. But the prophet promised Judah that kingship in Israel would be his, and the promise was made of complete kingship.<sup>[8]</sup>

Rabbi Moses's charge is that Friar Paul has distorted the meaning of the rabbinic text, taking it far beyond the narrow legal framework intended by the rabbis.

At a later point in the disputation, Friar Paul introduced rabbinic exegesis on Isaiah 52:13. Behold your sages said, concerning the Messiah, that he is more exalted than the angels. Now this can only be a reference to Jesus, who is both messiah and divinity. He brought [as proof] what is said in the *aggadah*: " [He] shall prosper, be exalted, and be raised to great heights."<sup>[9]</sup> He shall prosper beyond Abraham, be exalted beyond Moses, and be raised to greater heights than the serving angels."<sup>[10]</sup>

Nahmanides suggests in rebuttal that, because of his lack of knowledge of rabbinic literature, Friar Paul has simply misread the rabbinic statement.

Our sages say this regularly of all the saintly—the saintly are greater than the serving angels. Indeed Moses said to an angel: "Where I sit, you have no right to stand."<sup>[11]</sup> With regard to all Israel they said: "Israel is more beloved than the serving angels."<sup>[12]</sup> Rather, the intention of the author of this *aggadah* concerning the Messiah was as follows. Abraham converted the peoples and preached to them the faith of [the Holy One] blessed be he and disputed Nimrod and was unafraid of him. Moses did yet more, since he stood in his insignificance in opposition to Pharaoh, the great and wicked king, and showed him no quarter with respect to the terrible plagues with which he afflicted him and removed Israel from his grasp. The serving angels are deeply involved in the matter of redemption. . . . But the Messiah will do more than all of them. "His mind will be elevated

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in the ways of the Lord."<sup>[13]</sup> He will come and command the pope and all the kings of the nations in the name of God: "Let my people go that they may worship me."<sup>[14]</sup> He will perform great and many signs and will be utterly unafraid of them. He will stand in the city of Rome until he destroys it.<sup>[15]</sup>

Again, Nahmanides suggests a misunderstanding of the true meaning and intent of the rabbinic statement adduced by Friar Paul. Here the failure is alleged to be a reflection of the friar's woeful lack of knowledge of rabbinic literature, leading him to misunderstand commonly used imagery.

This first tactic was both uneconomical—in that it required separate argumentation on each specific rabbinic citation—and somewhat problematic. Exegesis of rabbinic statements and counter-exegesis can quickly bog down, although this ultimately was advantageous to Rabbi Moses and not to Friar Paul. Rabbi Moses took a number of approaches that were broader and more efficient.

The first of these pressed a line already noted in Rabbi Isaac ben Yedaiah—the contention that rabbinically held Christological views are inherently implausible. This was, in fact, Nahmanides' opening ploy, even before Friar Paul cited his first text. Friar Paul claimed that numerous statements submerged in rabbinic literature, when properly combined, present a picture of the Messiah that Jesus of Nazareth could readily be seen to fulfill. The obvious problem with such a claim is that it presupposes a remarkable level of insensitivity on the part of generations of Jewish scholars; it means that none of them properly understood texts with which they were deeply absorbed. Nahmanides was quick to pounce on this issue.

Let him answer me on this matter. Does he wish to say that the sages of the Talmud believed that Jesus was the Messiah and believed that he was fully human and truly divine, as believed by the Christians? But it is well known that the incident of Jesus took place at the time of the Second Temple and that he was born and killed prior to the destruction of the Second Temple. However, the sages of the Talmud lived after this destruction, sages like Rabbi Akiva and his associates. Those who codified the Mishnah, Rabbi and Rabbi Nathan, lived long after the destruction of the Second Temple—all the more so Rav Ashi, who composed and wrote the Talmud and who lived approximately four hundred years after the destruction of the Second Temple. If these sages believed in the messianic role of Jesus, that he was truly the Messiah and that his faith and religion were true, and if they wrote these things from which Friar Paul

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intends to prove this, then how did they remain in the Jewish faith and in their former tradition? For they were surely Jews, remained in the Jewish faith, and died Jews.<sup>[16]</sup>

Here Rabbi Moses expresses the problem in extreme fashion, asking how the Jewish sages could have believed in Jesus and remained Jews. In fact, however, Friar Paul was not claiming that these sages believed in Jesus; he was arguing that their utterances reveal a view of the Messiah that Jesus, in fact, fulfilled. Rabbi Moses addresses this subtler view as well.

Why did they not apostasize and convert to the religion of Jesus as Friar Paul did? He understood from their words that the faith of the Christians is true—heaven forfend—and went and apostasized on account of their words. But these sages themselves and their students who learned Torah from them lived and died Jews, as we are today.<sup>[17]</sup>

This formulation is more to the point. If there are such clear implications in the teaching of the rabbis, then why were none of them or their followers attuned to them? The possibility of such corporate insensitivity is very remote. Nonetheless, since it is possible, although unlikely, Friar Paul insisted on examining the issues on their merit. While this argument was not successful in obviating the debate and derailing Friar Paul's effort, this claim of Nahmanides remained an important point of defense addressed to his Jewish audience. It suggested that this entire new line of Dominican argumentation was fundamentally fallacious.

In many ways, Nahmanides' most effective weapon at Barcelona was to insist, from the outset, on direct discussion of the Christological implications of the rabbinic dicta advanced by Friar Paul. Rather than debate the messianic implications of these rabbinic statements in the abstract, Nahmanides introduced Jesus at every turn. Sensing a serious weakness in many of the claims of Friar Paul, Rabbi Moses pressed the issue repeatedly, urging that the rabbinic statements cited be juxtaposed to the historical Jesus.

The Latin report contains an interesting reference to this ploy.

There in the palace of the lord king, the said Jew was asked whether the Messiah, who is called Christ, had come. He responded with the assertion that he has not come. He added that the Messiah and Christ are the same and that, if it could be proved to him that the messiah had come, it could be believed to apply to none other than him, namely, Jesus Christ,

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in whom the Christians believe, since no one else has come who has dared to assume for himself this title nor has there been anyone else who has been believed to be Christ.<sup>[18]</sup>

Nahmanides did, in all likelihood, say this. The statement was not wrung out of him, however; it was exploited by him as a means of refuting Friar Paul's contentions.

To put this line of Jewish rebuttal in context, let us note one of the earliest exchanges. When Friar Paul adduced the well-known story that tells of the simultaneous destruction of the Second Temple and birth of the Messiah, Nahmanides agrees to accept the story provisionally, "for it affords proof for my case." He goes on to spell this out.

Behold it says that, on the day of destruction, after the Temple was destroyed, on that very day the Messiah was born. Thus, Jesus is not the Messiah as you say, for he was born and killed prior to the destruction of the Second Temple. Indeed his birth was in fact approximately two hundred years prior to the destruction of the Temple, and even according to your reckoning it was seventy-three years earlier.<sup>[19]</sup>

According to Rabbi Moses, this silenced Friar Paul. However, an observer stepped in to press Friar Paul's strategy.

The debate does not now concern Jesus. The question is only if the Messiah has come or not. You say that he has not come and this book of yours says that he has come.<sup>[20]</sup>

Here the two strategies are clearly contrasted: the Christian effort to abstract deliberately and create a broad portrait of the Messiah and the Jewish attempt to introduce Jesus immediately and concretely. There can be little doubt that this tactic of contrived abstraction was artificial and weak. Since the ultimate goal was to convince Jews of the truth of Christianity, the artificiality of this tactic made this line of Jewish response particularly telling. Again, for Rabbi Moses's Jewish audience, this was an effective rebuttal, and, in fact, it is clear that the Dominicans absorbed this criticism and made necessary alterations in their approach as a result.

Let us note one more instance of Rabbi Moses's insistence on introducing the historical figure of Jesus. Here, the Jewish spokesman goes beyond the rabbinic texts cited by Friar Paul and beyond the limits imposed on Jewish rebuttal. It is this exchange and Rabbi Moses's record of it that in all likelihood most aroused subsequent Dominican

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ire. In his long opening remarks on the second day, Rabbi Moses returned to the issue of the historical Jesus. When badgered by Friar Paul about whether he believed that the Messiah had come, Nahmanides replied:

No. Rather I believe and know that he has not come. There has been no one who has claimed or concerning whom it has been claimed that he is the Messiah, except for Jesus. And I cannot believe that he is the Messiah. For the prophet had said concerning the Messiah: "He shall rule from sea to sea, from the river to the ends of the earth."<sup>[21]</sup> Jesus, however, had no rule; rather, during his lifetime, he was pursued by his enemies and forced to hide from them. Ultimately he fell into their hands and could not save himself. How then could he redeem all of Israel? All the more so after his death he had no rule. For Roman rule does not come from him. Rather, even before they believed in him, the city of Rome ruled the world. After they took on his faith, they lost much power. Now the followers of Mohammed have greater rule than the Romans. Furthermore the prophet says that, in the times of the Messiah, "no longer will they need to teach one another to know the Lord; all of them shall know me."<sup>[22]</sup> He says: "For as the waters fill the sea, so shall the land be filled with knowledge of the Lord."<sup>[23]</sup> He also says: "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not take up sword against nation; they shall never again know war."<sup>[24]</sup> However, from the days of Jesus to the present, all the world has been full of violence and robbery. Indeed the Christians spill blood more than the other peoples, while at the same time they are sexually promiscuous. My lord the king, how difficult it would be for you and your knights if they could "never

again know war." The prophet further says concerning the Messiah: "His mouth shall be a rod to smite the land."<sup>[25]</sup> The rabbis explain in the book of lore in Friar Paul's possession: "They report to King Messiah, 'A certain state has rebelled against you.' He then says, 'Let the locust come and destroy it.' They report to him, 'A certain district has rebelled against you.' He says, 'Let the locust come and decimate it.'<sup>[26]</sup> This, however, did not happen with Jesus.<sup>[27]</sup>

What Nahmanides has done again is refuse to allow Friar Paul to reconstruct piecemeal his portrait of the rabbis' Messiah. He insists on projecting the historical Jesus and arguing that he did not fulfill the criteria established for the Messiah. While he closes this lengthy statement with a reference to rabbinic utterance and thus returns to the ground rules established for the confrontation, in fact, Rabbi Moses went beyond the established guidelines and argued, along lines we have already encountered, that Jesus did not fulfill biblical criteria

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either—a statement that undoubtedly aroused the ire of his Dominican listeners.

Rabbi Moses used one last ploy. While the most dramatic and potentially effective of his tactics, it was also the most problematic. From early in the discussion, Nahmanides claimed that belief in rabbinic aggadot was in no sense binding and mandatory, in effect, emasculating the innovative argumentation of Friar Paul. If rabbinic aggadot are not authoritative, then biblical proofs buttressed by rabbinic exegesis and further proofs drawn from freestanding talmudic dicta lose all force. It must be remembered that ultimately both Friar Paul and Nahmanides were addressing a Jewish audience, an audience for which broad disavowal of rabbinic aggadot would be—as it was for Nahmanides himself—difficult to accept. This last argument, directed forcefully at Friar Paul and his associates in the hope that it might discourage them from pursuing this argumentation any further, also had significant but problematic implications for Jewish auditors.

It is interesting that Nahmanides describes his utilization of this tactic as tentative at the outset. When Friar Paul introduced, early on the first day, the *aggadah* concerning the destruction of the Second Temple and the birth of the Messiah, Rabbi Moses depicts the following exchange. I responded and said: "I do not believe in this *aggadah*, however, it is proof for my views." Then he cried out and said: "Behold he denies their texts." I said: "Truly I do not believe that the Messiah was born on the day of the destruction of the Second Temple. Thus either this *aggadah* is not true or it has another meaning related to the mysteries of the sages. However, I shall accept it literally, as you have suggested, for it affords proof for my case."<sup>[28]</sup>

On the next day of the discussion, perhaps realizing that the challenge was in fact a serious one and that the tactic of negating the authority of *aggadah* might have to be resorted to more extensively, Nahmanides elaborated on this sensitive issue. Moreover, the Christian criticism of Nahmanides' dismissal of authoritative texts necessitated a more nuanced presentation.

Know that we have three categories of texts. One is the Bible, in which all of us believe completely. The second is called Talmud and consists of a commentary on the commandments of the Torah. For in the Torah there are six hundred and thirteen commandments, and there is not one of them which is not explained in the Talmud. We believe in the Talmud

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regarding explanation of the commandments. In addition, we have a third text which is called *midrash*, that is to say sermons, such as when the bishop stands and delivers a sermon and one of the listeners enjoys it and writes it down. He who believes in this text, well and good; he who does not believe in it does no harm. Thus we have sages who wrote that the Messiah will not be born until close to the time of redemption, when he will come to take us out of exile. Therefore I do not believe in this text, where it says that he was born on the day of the destruction of the Second Temple. We also call this text *aggadah*, i.e., tales, that is to say that they are only stories told by one person to another.<sup>[29]</sup>

In this speech, Nahmanides attempts to portray *aggadah* as unrelated to both the Bible and the Talmud. He depicts it as a literature of sermons and tales, copied down rather haphazardly. This is obviously not an accurate portrait of *aggadah*; Rabbi Moses is attempting, after all, to

contrast sharply the authority of the Bible and Talmud (really halachah) with the lack of authority of the aggadah, all in an effort to undercut the basic approach of Friar Paul. If Nahmanides had been willing to espouse this view wholeheartedly and consistently, Friar Paul's challenge would have been totally repudiated. To the extent that Rabbi Moses was ready to fall back on this tactic, it was the most effective weapon at his disposal. Clearly, however, it was a ploy that was utilized sparingly and hesitantly.

The reaction of the Latin report to this important strategem is revealing.

Although he did not wish to confess the truth unless forced by authoritative texts, when he was unable to explain these authoritative texts, he said publicly that he did not believe those authoritative texts which were adduced against him—although found in ancient and authentic books of the Jews—because they were, he claimed, sermons, in which their teachers often lied for the purpose of exhorting the people. As a result, he denied both the teachers and the sacred writings of the Jews.<sup>[30]</sup>

This description is not far from that of the Hebrew account. It differs only in two major respects. First, it turns Nahmanides' tactic into a ploy of desperation, which it was not in the Hebrew narrative. Second, it differs in its evaluation of the repudiation of aggadah. While the denial of aggadic texts was surely a difficult step for Rabbi Moses, it was far from an impossible one. For the Christian reporter, however, steeped in his own tradition's attitudes toward *auctoritates*, it was an unthinkable blasphemy. Nahmanides himself attributes such

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impassioned recoiling to Friar Paul Christian. After describing his first statement of disbelief in an aggadic text, he depicts Friar Paul's violent reaction: "Then he cried out and said, 'Behold he denies their texts!'" It is quite likely that this is an accurate report; the same shock is reflected in the later Latin account of the proceedings. To the medieval Christian mind, particularly to a Dominican mind, such treatment of *auctoritates* was unthinkable.

The issue of Nahmanides' own view of the repudiation of aggadic statements requires a bit more analysis. The general tendency of those who have dealt with the position espoused by Rabbi Moses at Barcelona has been to see his denial of aggadah as a stance taken out of dire necessity and inconsistent with the personal attitudes of a thinker who is, after all, viewed as one of the giants of early kabbalistic speculation. Recently, Bernard Septimus has argued for a far more nuanced view of the Nahmanidean intellectual position in general and his stance toward aggadah in particular.

Another integrating perspective on Nahmanides is to view him as a genius at intellectual crossroads. At Nahmanides' birth, the Tosafists had just completed their revolution of talmudic studies; Kabbalah had recently emerged into the light of history in Provence; and Maimonides, the greatest representative of the Andalusian tradition, was completing his career in exile. All of these traditions converged at the turn of the twelfth century in Catalonia during a period of relative security and prosperity, releasing a remarkable burst of creative energy and versatile achievement. Nahmanides was the leading figure in this little Catalan renaissance.<sup>[31]</sup>

Septimus proceeds from this general assessment to important specific observations with regard to Nahmanides' position on the authority of aggadah.

Although Nahmanides' attitude toward the nonhalachic material in classical rabbinic literature is highly complex and undoubtedly more reverent than Ibn Ezra's, he almost invariably attaches the term "*aggadah*" to those interpretations about which he seems uneasy, which make sense only when interpreted non-literally, or whose seriousness and authority he is calling into question. "*Aggadah*" can even be rejected in favor of kabbalistic interpretation. There is also support in Nahmanides' usage for the linkage of the term "*aggadah*" and popular homiletics—including one striking instance of an original interpretation proposed by Nahmanides "in the manner of *aggadah*." By contrast, a position referred to by Nahmanides as "the words of our masters" (*divrei rabbo-*

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*tenu*) is treated with respect and seriousness of a different order. The term "*rabbotenu*" tends to suggest a somewhat more weighty consensus. Nahmanides' tendency may therefore be akin to those geonic and Andalusian authors who deny absolute authority to individual *aggadot* while recognizing the more binding character of rabbinic teachings that represent a classical consensus. I wish to stress, however, that, though the term "*rabbotenu*" generally accompanies respectful treatment, it does not imply acceptance as a binding last word.<sup>[32]</sup>

The implication of this careful analysis is that Rabbi Moses ben Nahman was not being unfaithful to his general position in taking the stance that he did at Barcelona. Indeed, a closer look at his own statements there corroborates the conclusions of Septimus. Rabbi Moses does introduce into his discussion two identifiable bases on which specific *aggadot* might be repudiated. In his longer statement, delivered at the opening of the second day of discussion, he notes a significant issue with regard to the authority of *aggadah*, namely, the reality of dissonant *aggadot*. Thus, after citing again the rabbinic statement that identifies temporally the destruction of the Temple and the birth of the Messiah, he indicates that "we have sages who wrote that the Messiah will not be born until close to the time of redemption."<sup>[33]</sup> Given the reality of unresolved differences of opinion in the realm of *aggadah*, there is nothing unthinkable in a decision by Nahmanides to reject one aggadic tradition in favor of another diametrically opposed to the first. In his earlier statement on the first day, he opens yet another avenue for repudiating certain *aggadot*, at least, understood simplistically. Again, with regard to the *aggadah* mentioned a moment ago, he says: "Thus either this *aggadah* is not true or it has another meaning related to the mysteries of the sages."<sup>[34]</sup> Thus, Nahmanides does not take a position inimical to his own views as expressed elsewhere or unthinkable in a traditionalist context. To be sure, put as bluntly as formulated in Barcelona, his view had to encounter some resistance in sectors of the Jewish world (as indeed it did); it was in no sense, however, as unthinkable a position as Friar Paul and some moderns have made it out to be.

Again, in considering this issue, the reality of two disparate audiences noted at the outset must be firmly borne in mind. For his Jewish listeners and readers, Nahmanides was advancing a position with regard to the specific *aggadah* that juxtaposes the destruction of the Temple with the birth of the Messiah which was perfectly acceptable and respectable. Rejecting such a statement on the grounds that it

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conflicted with other aggadic pronouncements or on the grounds that it must have a hidden meaning is fully consonant with Nahmanides' general stance on *aggadah* and with a broad traditionalist perspective. The formulation presented in Rabbi Moses's long speech opening the proceedings of the second day is clearly not designed for a Jewish audience. It represents an extreme and somewhat skewed statement—still not blatantly inaccurate—designed to address the Christian listeners and to convince them that the entire new approach proposed by Friar Paul would be utterly unavailing.

In sum, the defense of Rabbi Moses—intended to discourage the Dominicans in their future efforts and to reassure his fellow Jews—was intelligent and diversified. It followed four major directions: (1) intense and specific battling over each and every rabbinic source adduced by Friar Paul; (2) dismissal of the implausible notion that the rabbis held Christological views without understanding their implications; (3) refusal to allow Friar Paul to build his case in the abstract and insistence on testing individual rabbinic texts against the historical figure of Jesus of Nazareth; and (4) repudiation of certain aggadic statements. To these lines of defense explicitly pursued at Barcelona we must add one more, implicit in all likelihood in some of Rabbi Moses's statements during the confrontation and explicit in his Hebrew report on the proceedings. This last tactic was the consistent discrediting of Friar Paul for his general lack of intelligence as well as for his more specific lack of knowledge of the rabbinic literature on the basis of which he was claiming to build his new case.

It is not easy to assess these defensive efforts. If Rabbi Moses had hoped to argue so effectively that the new missionizing argumentation would be thoroughly discredited, then he had to be disappointed. As we have already seen, the new missionizing went on vigorously. However, some of his arguments did result in a rethinking of issues in the Dominican camp and in a refinement of the new approach, as seen strikingly in the *Pugio Fidei*. While certainly not the goal of Rabbi Moses, this refinement is a tribute to his acuity. More important from his own point of view, Nahmanides did crystallize a number of cogent Jewish responses, which could be utilized by Jews everywhere in meeting the new Christian claims. He performed the extremely important task of meeting the new challenge directly, blunting its immediate impact, and setting guidelines for his fellow Jews as they prepared to meet similar assaults.

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Unfortunately, we are not well informed as to subsequent Jewish activities and attitudes. Two major items in this ongoing response to the new missionizing have survived. The first is Nahmanides' own report of the proceedings. This detailed narrative must certainly be seen as an element in the postdebate activity on the part of the Jews. It was composed by Rabbi Moses of Gerona for a number of purposes: first and foremost, to serve as a guide to the proselytizing thrusts of Friar Paul and to provide answers that might be given in the face of these thrusts. Nahmanides was thus compelled to write a highly detailed description. While no such comprehensive manual was required—for the moment—from the Christian side, there was no certainty as to the subsequent targets of Friar Paul's efforts. The Jews of Spain, and indeed of all Europe, had to be informed of the nature of the new challenge and of the lines of defense adumbrated by a distinguished Jewish thinker. That is why the account penned by Rabbi Moses is lengthy and explicit; it is also why the Jewish replies occupy so much more space than the Christian questions. We may surely assume that Friar Paul did not limit himself to the brief statements depicted by Rabbi Moses. As we shall see, Nahmanides' account was utilized by the Jews of this period as precisely the kind of manual its author intended it to be.

There is, at the same time, an interesting note of historical narrative in the account of Nahmanides. Rabbi Moses provides more than simply a manual of Jewish responses. He transforms his report of the confrontation into an absorbing tale replete with villains, heroes, and drama. This transformation had a serious purpose. As we have already noted, part of Nahmanides' technique was to discredit the Christian protagonist as a means of rebutting his arguments. The dramatic quality of the narrative, particularly its vituperative depiction of the Dominican and the contrasting self-portrait of the Jewish spokesman, serves to convey to the Jewish reader the sense that the new Christian argumentation could hardly be taken seriously.

There seems to be, finally, a note of personal apologetics as well. Both the Latin and Hebrew reports mention the rabbi's efforts to halt the proceedings, undertaken on the advice of Christians and Jews alike.<sup>[35]</sup> According to the Latin account, this involved some sharp criticism of Rabbi Moses by his coreligionists; Nahmanides himself omits any reference to such criticism. In any case, the confrontation was a trying experience, and it is not surprising that the protagonist of the

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minority would have wished to present the events in such a way as to refute any actual or potential criticism. The personal apologetics of Rabbi Moses are reflected in a number of ways. First, he attempts to portray himself as self-confident and in command throughout. His answers are long and thorough, while the questions posed by his rival are brief and sketchy. Second, while

emphasizing throughout that the debate was forced on him, at the same time, he tries to show himself as less than totally passive. We have noted earlier an outstanding example of this in his depiction of the establishment of the agenda. We have suggested that the role imputed by Nahmanides to himself is a purely fanciful one and that even his description of the items on the agenda is distorted in such a way as to mute the evidence of Christian initiative and control. Thus, Rabbi Moses seems, on the one hand, to be presenting himself as disputing against his will and, on the other, to be portraying himself as retaining a measure of active power. Related to this is the ambiguous description of the relationship between King James I and the Jewish spokesman. Nahmanides goes to great lengths to emphasize the positive relationship between himself and the monarch. As has often been noted, he has the king calling a halt to the proceedings after the fourth day and observing, "I have never seen a man whose case is wrong argue it as well as you have done."<sup>[36]</sup> More striking yet is the Jewish sage's claim that he was unwilling to expound publicly the full anti-Roman (i.e., anti-Christian) content of a particular aggadah but that he did explain it to the king privately.<sup>[37]</sup> This description of a warm and friendly relationship is belied somewhat by Nahmanides' own depiction of the formal behavior of the king, who time after time refuses peremptorily the requests of the rabbi. Again, this ambiguity seems to flow from Rabbi Moses's desire to paint himself as both reluctant and aggressive, forced to debate against his will but enjoying the good graces of his sovereign.

There are thus both public and private purposes to the composition of Nahmanides' report. One further source reveals that this Hebrew record did, in fact, serve as the kind of manual its author had intended. Subsequent to his preaching efforts in Spain, Friar Paul Christian, in the late 1260s, turned his attention to the realm of King Louis IX of France. Arriving during the monarch's preparations for his second and final crusading venture, Friar Paul took full advantage of the heightened fervor of the royal court to press a number of his programs, in particular, his missionizing campaign. Chance survival of an interesting Hebrew document shows the Jews of northern France

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benefiting from the experience and narrative of Rabbi Moses ben Nahman. The Hebrew document introduces itself as follows:

Be painstaking in the study of Torah, and this is what you should respond to the unbeliever. Behold now, in the year 1269, an apostate from Montpellier has arrived, revealing the secrets of the Torah and reviling the *aggadot* of our Talmud. He had already undertaken a debate with Rabbi Moses ben Nahman before the King of Aragon in Barcelona.<sup>[38]</sup>

Following this introduction, there is a résumé of Rabbi Moses' report, giving Friar Paul's arguments and Nahmanides' responses. The northern French Jew who fashioned this résumé in effect urged his fellow Jews to acquaint themselves with these claims and counterclaims so as to prepare themselves for the anticipated sermons of Friar Paul. Having said this, we must further observe that this Jewish leader was superficial in his reading of Nahmanides' text. All he did was copy a series of arguments and counterarguments. There is, for example, no clear understanding of Friar Paul's strategem of deliberate abstraction and thus no full appreciation of Rabbi Moses's insistence on introducing Jesus of Nazareth at every turn. Yet more interesting is the refusal of this northern French Jew to follow Nahmanides' lead in disclaiming the authority of aggadic texts. At no point in the résumé is this tactic mentioned or recommended.<sup>[39]</sup> Divergences notwithstanding, it is clear that Nahmanides' account was in fact widely known and that it did serve as a manual for rebutting the contentions of Friar Paul. The Jews who read his report came to share his view that the challenge posed by the formerly Jewish Dominican preacher was a formidable one; they also shared his sense that the lines of defense adumbrated at Barcelona had proven to be effective and could be usefully imitated by other Jews subjected to the new missionizing argumentation.<sup>[40]</sup>

## Rabbi Mordechai ben Joseph

While the response of Rabbi Moses ben Nahman constitutes our fullest reflection of the Jewish reactions to the new missionizing argumentation mounted by Friar Paul Christian, we do possess one more major source that is addressed directly to this new proselytizing thrust. Under very trying circumstances, Rabbi Mordechai ben Joseph of Avignon set himself the goal of rebutting the new missionizing argumentation in a lengthy composition that he entitled *Mahazik<sup>41</sup> Emunah* (The Reinforcer of Faith).<sup>[41]</sup>

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In the opening pages of the extant manuscript, which are unfortunately badly damaged and most difficult to decipher, Rabbi Mordechai describes the conditions under which he set about his task, conditions of strict house arrest.

They indicated to us the fate of all those sequestered. This was to be the punishment: Anyone who exited through the door of his house would bear responsibility for his fate. He [antecedent unclear] commanded to close up some of the entrances with plaster and stone and that some of them be equipped with iron rods. But God intervened and their counsel was foiled. "Their eyes are besmeared, and they see not; their minds, and they cannot think."<sup>[42]</sup> The entrances were opened wide. When we saw our loved ones, we found solace and rest. While I remained in my house in sadness, where I accepted suffering gladly, God in his loving-kindness invigorated my spirits. "The spirit of God drove me on."<sup>[43]</sup> I completed a book and corrected it, bringing it to fruition. I called it *Mahazik<sup>44</sup> Emunah*, available to those who know wisdom, for [in it] I explained secret things and I divided it into thirteen chapters.<sup>[44]</sup>

The precise circumstances that gave rise to this punishment are not clear. What is important is the result—a book intended to buttress the beliefs of Rabbi Mordechai's contemporaries.

Friar Paul is mentioned in the *Mahazik<sup>45</sup> Emunah*, but, again unfortunately, those pages that explain the intellectual origins of the work are now illegible. A look at the lengthy table of contents supplied by the author will indicate clearly the mid-thirteenth-century backdrop of the book and the immediate influence of the new missionizing argumentation developed by Friar Paul.

The first chapter is intended to prove that three exiles were announced to Israel between the dissected pieces [a reference to the divine promise delivered in Genesis 15:13–16 and 18–21, between the dissected pieces of four animals], and one is the exile in which we find ourselves today. I intend to prove that, because an edict was decreed against us, this is the longest exile and we still remain in it, dispersed among the nations. Therefore the Messiah has not come to gather his dispersed.

The second chapter is intended to prove that it was decreed that this exile be longer than the other exiles. Thus it is no surprise that the Messiah tarries, for his time has not yet come. At the appointed end he will come to gather his dispersed at the end of days, according to the words of the prophets.

The third chapter is intended to prove and to explain the length of [this] exile, that it is properly the longest of all. When their Messiah ap-

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peared, Israel had not yet gone into exile; thus it is clear that the Messiah has not come. Thus it has been decreed, and there is a fixed end to our exile.

The fourth chapter is intended to prove that, because of repentance, the Creator will advance the time of redemption. The intention was to strengthen the hearts of people so that they not despair as a result of the length of exile and so that they not say that their hope has been lost and so that they repent. All this proves that the Messiah has not come. We further proved in this chapter that, at the end, Israel will be saved even without repentance. We are in exile; therefore obviously the end has not yet arrived and the Messiah has not yet come.

The fifth chapter is intended to prove that we are in exile only for annulment of the commandments written in the Torah. I have done so in order to obviate the belief of those who say that we are in exile for the sin related to their Messiah. . .<sup>[45]</sup>

The sixth chapter indicates that the Messiah whom all the prophets predicted is human and not divine. It is intended to obviate that belief which says that the Messiah has come and is divine and human, taking on flesh and blood. If the matter is not so, as I prove in this chapter, then matters are not as they say and the Messiah has not come. For they also acknowledge that all the prophets predicted the Messiah.

The seventh chapter is intended to prove that the Messiah has not come. This chapter is intended to prove the essential issue, that the predictions for the future and the signs and the wonders required for that time, like the matter of Gog and Magog and the matter of . . .<sup>[46]</sup> and many wonders, have not been realized. Thus the Messiah has not yet come.

The eighth chapter is intended to prove if the Messiah has been born or is yet to be born. This chapter as well is intended to prove that he has not come. For, if he has been born, then our sages said that he was born on the day of the destruction [of the Second Temple], but according to their view he was born long before the destruction [of the Second Temple]. But if he is yet to be born, then how could he come prior to being born?

The ninth chapter is intended to prove that two Messiahs will come at the end of days, the Messiah son of Joseph and the Messiah son of David. The prophets foretold both of them. They [the Christians] say that their Messiah came by himself before the destruction [of the Second Temple]. Therefore the prediction of the prophets was not realized and their vision not fulfilled. With regard to the coming of the Messiahs it [the vision of the prophets] was not fulfilled; it shall, however, be fulfilled at the time of the end, for the prophets neither lie nor deceive.

The tenth chapter is intended to prove that the Messiah whom the prophets predicted will come to gather Israel. . . .<sup>[47]</sup> Thus the Messiah

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should have come to gather them from the four corners of the earth. But if you say that [it—i.e., the prophecies] refers to those remaining in Babylonia and to the ten tribes, indeed he [Jesus] did not gather them and they remain in exile. Thus the Messiah has not come. He will come at the end of days to gather them.

The eleventh chapter [is intended] to prove the honor of Israel, the lengthening of days, and the strengthening of faith during the days of the Messiah. These things did not happen during the days of their Messiah. There was no honor for Israel or lengthening of days—indeed even today they die after brief days as do we. Thus the Messiah about whom the prophets predicted that there would develop in his days honor for Israel and strengthening of faith and lengthening of days has not yet come. When he does come, all these predictions and consolations will be realized.

The twelfth chapter is intended to prove the downfall and undoing during the days of the Messiah of the nations that exiled us and subjugated us in exile. Thus surely the Messiah has not yet come. . . .

The thirteenth chapter is intended to prove that the world will continue to proceed in its accustomed pattern during the days of the Messiah. The worship service and the commandments will not be annulled during the days of the Messiah. It is known that their Messiah innovated a new religion for himself and claimed that the commandments—which are eternal statutes—were annulled with the coming of their Messiah and that they were no longer required to offer sacrifices and that there would no longer be prophets, for prophecy has been sealed with his coming. We prove in this chapter with clear proofs that it is not as they claim. The Torah and the commandments will remain in force and be everlasting. Thus it was not the Messiah that came; rather he is yet to come, with the aid of God. May our eyes see this and may our hearts be gladdened; in his salvation our souls will rejoice. Our King will crown us speedily and shortly. Amen.<sup>[48]</sup>

Reflections of the innovative mid-thirteenth-century missionizing argumentation abound. There is, in particular, ample evidence of Rabbi Mordechai's awareness of the thrusts of Friar Paul Christian. The case made by Friar Paul at Barcelona revolved around four key assertions: (1) the Messiah has already come; (2) the Messiah was intended to be both divine and human; (3) the Messiah was intended to suffer and be killed for the salvation of mankind; and (4) the laws and ceremonials were intended to cease after the advent of the Messiah. Rabbi Mordechai reacts to three of these four items. The first—that the Messiah has already come—is clearly the heart of the matter for him. He addresses this issue in almost every chapter (all except chap-

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ter 5); when he discusses the coming of the Messiah directly in chapter seven, he calls this "the essential issue." The formulation of chapter eight—whether the Messiah has yet been born or is eventually to be born—clearly recalls the discussion of this issue at Barcelona, based on the rabbinic materials that speak of the birth of the Messiah as already having taken place, for example, at the time of the destruction of the Second Temple. In chapter eight, Rabbi Mordechai makes reference to precisely those same rabbinic sources. Chapter six, which argues that the Messiah was intended to be human and not divine, clearly addresses the second item on the Barcelona agenda. The third agenda item is not directly confronted. However, the fourth item, which was not broached at Barcelona, is the subject of the thirteenth and last chapter. Thus, the essential content of the argumentation, the use of rabbinic materials, and discussion of many of the sources used at Barcelona all indicate awareness of the new missionizing argumentation of Friar Paul.

In addition to these general considerations, there is direct reference to Friar Paul and his arguments in the closing chapter of the *Mahazik Emunah*. There, Rabbi Mordechai takes up the notion of the annulment of the commandments during the days of the Messiah. In the course of this discussion, he adduces two rabbinic texts that speak of the disappearance of most prayers and sacrifices during the days of the Messiah and attempts to show that these texts reflect the special circumstances of messianic times—the lack of this-worldly cares and sinning—and do not bespeak such an annulment. To illustrate the closeness that will exist between God and humanity at that time, he adduces an aggadah concerning God and the righteous.

It is written: "I shall walk in your midst."<sup>[49]</sup> This is analogous to a king who went out to walk with his beloved associates in an orchard. The associate was frightened of him. The superior said to him: "Why are you frightened of me? I am akin to you." Likewise the Holy One will in the future stroll with the righteous in paradise. When the righteous see him, they will recoil from him. Then the Holy One will say to them: "Why do you recoil from me? Behold I am akin to you."<sup>[50]</sup>

Rabbi Mordechai goes to great lengths to explain this aggadah as referring to the relationship between God and the righteous at the end of days and concludes this digressive explanation with the following:

I dealt at length with this *aggadah* because that certain fellow [ha-ish ha-yadu'a] distorted the meaning of this *aggadah*. He said that "you are akin

On the last day of the Barcelona proceedings, Friar Paul had utilized precisely this aggadah in exactly the manner suggested by Rabbi Mordechai. "That certain fellow" surely is a discreet reference to Friar Paul and establishes even more specifically the relation of the *Mahazik Emunah* to his innovative argumentation.<sup>[52]</sup>

Rabbi Mordechai's treatment of this new missionizing argumentation is both less and more useful than that afforded by the lengthy narrative report of Rabbi Moses ben Nahman. It is less useful in that Rabbi Mordechai is not constrained, as was Nahmanides, to reply directly to the claims of Friar Paul. There is, as a result, a looseness about the arguments of Rabbi Mordechai that we did not encounter in Nahmanides' narrative. Yet, precisely because of this, the *Mahazik Emunah* is ultimately even more interesting. If our essential concern is to fathom the Jewish response to the new argumentation, then the lack of constraint and the truly internal Jewish focus of Rabbi Mordechai's opus make it valuable. In this work, we have a Jewish leader addressing his fellow Jews in the terms that he believes will be most meaningful to them. Thus, Rabbi Mordechai affords us an opportunity to understand more fully from within the directions of Jewish reaction to the new thrusts.

In analyzing the claims of Rabbi Mordechai, let us begin with the bases of argumentation. Herein, of course, lay the essential innovation of Friar Paul's approach, his utilization of rabbinic exegesis of the Bible and of freestanding rabbinic dicta. Rabbi Mordechai is obviously aware of this important innovation, yet he clearly is not overwhelmed by it. While he makes repeated reference

to rabbinic sources, these references take second place both quantitatively and qualitatively to his use of biblical text. Throughout his book, he places the heaviest emphasis on what he sees as the ultimate source of religious truth, God's revelation as crystallized in the Bible. Thus, the essence of his argument is the reassuring of his fellow-Jews that the entire weight of divinely revealed truth supports their tradition. Rabbinic material is important and interesting, but random rabbinic texts cannot overturn the essential truths reflected, according to Rabbi Mordechai, at every turn in the biblical record of revelation. In this sense, then, a look at the internal Jewish responses to Friar Paul's new tactic shows it to be less meaningful than he would have wished. When all was said

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and done, much of Jewish thinking returned to traditionally biblically based rebuttals of Christian claims.

When we turn our attention away from the bases of argumentation to the substance of that argumentation, we are immediately struck by the concentration on the issue of whether the Messiah has already come. While only one chapter addresses itself centrally to this issue, eleven others make reference to it. In discussing the Barcelona agenda, we already hypothesized that the first item was actually the key to all the rest, and indeed the *Mahazik Emunah* substantiates that hypothesis. It is obviously Rabbi Mordechai's intention to prove and re-prove and prove again that the Messiah has not yet come. That issue is the linchpin. If the Christians could prove that assertion, then truth would lay with them; if Jews could prove their view that the Messiah has not yet come, then their faith would be substantiated. This is not to negate the significance of other issues. We have already suggested that there was value for the Christian camp in massing numerous arguments simultaneously; for the Jews, likewise, the more rebuttals that could be marshaled, the better. The *Mahazik Emunah*, however, does help us identify the heart of the debate. Let us gain some sense of the style of Rabbi Mordechai's argumentation by quoting some of chapter 7, in which he argues directly that the Messiah has not yet come.

The seventh chapter is intended to prove that the Messiah whom all the prophets predicted that he would come to gather the dispersed of Israel has not yet come. . . .

First I shall bring proof from the Torah that the Messiah has not come, for the Creator promised us full redemption in the future. For in the covenant struck between the dissected pieces it is written: "To your offspring I assign this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates."<sup>[53]</sup> He then counted ten nations, citing first the Kenites, the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites. Now these three were not given to Israel during the days of Moses, may he rest in peace, or during the days of Joshua or during the days of David. Now it is impossible to say that there was not sufficient merit to warrant disinheriting them and fulfilling the promise, for with this covenant and oath there were no conditions, as we explained in the first chapter.

But in truth there are destined to be realized inevitably during the days of the Messiah many [biblical] statements regarding the future, such as the [statement regarding] the cities of refuge. . . . It is said: "And when the Lord your God enlarges your territory, [as he swore to your fathers],

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and gives you all the land that he promised to give your fathers—if you faithfully observe all this instruction that I enjoin upon you this day, to love the Lord your God and to walk in his ways at all times—] then you shall add three more towns to those three [the three already set aside as cities of refuge]."<sup>[54]</sup> This never took place. It is further said in the prophecy of Isaiah: "In the days to come, the mount of the Lord's house shall stand firm above the mountains and tower above the hills; And all the nations shall gaze upon it with joy."<sup>[55]</sup> This is not now the case. All the nations do not . . .<sup>[56]</sup> upon it, and it does not tower above the hills, for subsequent to their Messiah Jerusalem was conquered by the Muslims. Further: "For instruction shall come forth from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."<sup>[57]</sup> We do not see now that people go to Jerusalem to seek wisdom, for it is destroyed and desolate.

It is further said: "In that day, the Lord will apply his hand again to redeeming the other part of his people from Assyria, as also from Babylonia and from Assyria and from Egypt."<sup>[58]</sup> Who is it that redeemed [them] from Babylonia and the other

lands and will apply this hand again to gather them from the ends of the earth and collect Judah and Israel from the four corners of the world? Who redeemed them the first time and will redeem them a second time? Only the Lord, may he be blessed, for their Messiah did not yet exist [at the time of the first ingathering]. Indeed those scattered about to the four winds are Israel and Judah. Isaiah further says: "Strengthen the hands that are slack; make firm the tottering knees."<sup>[59]</sup> Whose hands are slack in exile and whose knees tottering? Only Israel. Now at the end of this chapter he says: "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come with shouting to Zion."<sup>[60]</sup>

He [Isaiah] says: "Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and declare to her that her term of service is over, that her iniquity is expiated; for she has received at the hand of the Lord double for all her sins."<sup>[61]</sup> Who is it that received at the hand of the Lord double for all her sins but Israel. He further says: "He gives strength to the weary, fresh vigor to the spent."<sup>[62]</sup> Who is weary and spent in exile but us. Concerning whom is it said: "Those who trust in the Lord shall renew their strength."<sup>[63]</sup> Surely the weak. However, those who today enjoy power shall be reversed and become weak. Likewise all these sections are straightforward, speaking only about those who live today under the oppression of exile.

It says in the Torah that during the days of the Messiah there will be "peace in the land and you shall lie down untroubled by anyone."<sup>[64]</sup> Likewise Isaiah says: "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard lie down with the kid; [the calf, the beast of prey, and the fatling together, with a little boy to herd them.] The cow and the bear shall graze, [their young shall lie down together; and the lion, like the ox, shall eat straw.] A babe shall play over a viper's hole, [and an infant pass his hand over an adder's den.]"<sup>[65]</sup> Where have we found such peace during the days of their

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Messiah? Indeed it was the opposite, for dissension multiplied on the earth, along with dissidence and heresy.<sup>[66]</sup>

I have quoted this material at length to give the flavor of Rabbi Mordechai's argumentation. The heavy reliance on direct biblical text is manifest. Indeed, as we read this section, there is an obvious echo of Nahmanides' independent speech on the second day of the Barcelona proceedings. Here, as there, the basic stance is that the entire picture of messianic days as presented throughout the Scriptures has not been yet realized and thus the suggestion that the Messiah has already come is patently untrue. There is little sophistication about this argument, but it is clearly a highly meaningful one to such Jewish leaders as Rabbi Moses ben Nahman and Rabbi Mordechai ben Joseph. In this sense, the increasingly adroit argumentation mounted by Friar Paul proved of limited effectiveness. The central Jewish response elaborated for internal Jewish usage is that the overwhelming weight of biblical truth clearly and simply repudiates the new (as well as old) Christian claims.

While his case against the prior coming of the Messiah constitutes the essence of Rabbi Mordechai's rebuttal of the new missionizing thrusts, his book also affords some sense of the fourth agenda item at Barcelona, the issue of the annulment of Jewish law. Because that issue was never debated by Friar Paul and Rabbi Moses, we were previously unable to identify the force of this fourth issue. Since Rabbi Mordechai devotes the final chapter of the *Mahazik<sup>\*</sup> Emunah* to it, he provides us with a sense of both the Christian argument and the Jewish counterargument. The thirteenth chapter [is intended] to prove that the commandments and sacrifices are not annulled during the days of the Messiah.

The Lord wished to provide Israel with merit, therefore he granted them extensively Torah and commandments. Indeed the commandments were given for the well-being of the universe, to distance [humanity] from murder and adultery and robbery. Likewise the commandments rooted in obedience [as opposed to those rooted in rational considerations] are like steps intended for the ascent to the house of God. All the days of the [existence of the] world mankind must occupy itself with maintenance of the universe and must distance itself from ugliness and. . . .<sup>[67]</sup>

The sages of the Talmud said that the only difference between the present world and the days of the Messiah is [Israel's] subjugation by the nations. During the days of Hezekiah, who was a righteous king, called "the eternal father, a peaceable ruler,"<sup>[68]</sup> they [the Jews] held fast to the

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commandments more than in prior generations, as is said: "They searched from Dan to Beersheba and could not find an infant not expert in [the laws of] impurity and purity."<sup>[62]</sup> Likewise during the days of the Messiah, when he comes, we believe that they [Jews] will still be expert in [the laws of] impurity and purity, in the Torah and the commandments. Indeed when the Torah was given at Sinai, it was not given for a limited time period. Just as the commandments are dependent upon fear of the Lord, so too will they never be annulled—such as "I am the Lord your God";<sup>[63]</sup> "You shall have no other gods beside me";<sup>[64]</sup> "You must fear the Lord your God";<sup>[65]</sup> and such as "You shall not swear falsely by my name";<sup>[66]</sup> "You shall not revile God";<sup>[67]</sup> "You shall love the Lord your God."<sup>[68]</sup> All these commandments written in the Torah brook no distinctions and will never be annulled. Regarding that which is said in the *aggadah*: "Rabbi Yohanan [said] in the name of Rabbi Menahem of Galya: 'In the future all the prayers will be annulled, but prayers of thanksgiving will never be annulled.'<sup>[69]</sup> Likewise regarding that which he said in a different *aggadah*: "In the future all the sacrifices [will be annulled] except for the thanksgiving offering."<sup>[70]</sup> He [Rabbi Menahem] intended by [the term] "in the future" the world to come. For there are two time periods: first the days of the Messiah, when they [the Jews] will remain for many years in the land of Israel and offer sacrifices, and subsequently there will be the world to come, when the righteous shall luxuriate in Eden and receive their reward. Then there will take place a different revival of the dead, some to receive reward and some to be punished. Regarding that time period, the prophet said: "Many of those that sleep in the dust [of the earth] will awake, some to eternal life, others to [reproaches, to] everlasting abhorrence."<sup>[71]</sup> At that time, there will no longer be an evil inclination in the world, as Rabbi Joshua ben Levi said in Tractate Avodah Zarah: "In the future he [God] will bring the evil inclination and slaughter it before the righteous."<sup>[72]</sup> Therefore they will not need to be aware of foulness and murder and robbery. Inevitably then all the sacrifices will be annulled, except for the sacrifice of thanksgiving. That is to say that they will give thanks to the Holy One, blessed be he, and will luxuriate with him in Eden. Alternatively we can explain this [the statements of Rabbi Menahem] even during the days of the Messiah. That is to say that the prayers will be annulled because they will no longer need to request this-worldly necessities, for the world will be bounteous all the days, without effort and work. They will only require [prayers of] praise and thanksgiving to God. Likewise there will be no sinners who will require sacrifices for sin and transgression, as is written: "Sinners will disappear from the earth."<sup>[73][74]</sup>

I shall return to my proofs that all the commandments will be in force during the days of the Messiah. The sages of the Talmud are divided in

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Tractate Berachot with regard to recollection of the exodus from Egypt during the days of the Messiah, specifically Ben Zoma and the sages. They say there: "So that you may remember the day of your departure from the land of Egypt as long as you live."<sup>[82]</sup> But are we to remember the exodus from Egypt during the days of the Messiah? But it has already been said: 'Assuredly, a time is coming—declares the Lord—when it shall no longer be said, "As the Lord lives who brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt," but rather, "As the Lord lives who brought the Israelites out of the northland."<sup>[83]</sup>' It seems that it was Ben Zoma's view that we will not remember the exodus from Egypt during the days of the Messiah, and this is a positive commandment. What they were saying to us is not that [remembrance of] the exodus from Egypt would be abrogated, meaning that it would not be annulled during the days of the Messiah, but rather that [remembrance of release from] the domination of the nations would be primary and [remembrance of] the exodus from Egypt would be secondary. Similarly one finds: "You shall be called Jacob no more, but Israel shall be your name."<sup>[84]</sup> [This does] not [mean] that the name Jacob is abrogated, but rather that Israel is primary and Jacob secondary.<sup>[85]</sup>

This passage shows us the essential techniques used by Rabbi Mordechai. He mounts three independent positive arguments for the continued relevance of the commandments in messianic times: one from reasonable consideration of the functions of the commandments, one based on rabbinic sources, and one (the most important) rooted in biblical revelation. Having established these, he proceeds to cite some of the recent arguments mounted on the basis of rabbinic literature and to rebut them. In this case, since we lacked evidence of the nature of Friar Paul's rabbinically derived case against the observance of the commandments, Rabbi Mordechai's material serves to fill in the lacunae. He shows us a number of rabbinic sources utilized by Friar Paul and then submits these sources to his own analysis.

This passage alerts us to one last, and very important, tendency of Rabbi Mordechai's, a tendency that pervades the entire work. While there is surely much that is defensive in his approach, there is also a positive line of argumentation throughout. Put another way, it was not enough for Rabbi Mordechai to simply rebut Friar Paul's contentions; he was anxious to construct an independently positive statement of Jewish views as well. We have just seen him do this with respect to the issue of Jewish law. This same dual thrust typifies his work in its entirety. Let us look again at the table of contents. We see

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throughout a consistent thread of rebuttal of Friar Paul. (1) The Messiah has not yet come. (2) The Messiah was not intended to be divine and human. (3) Even when the Messiah does appear, the commandments will not be annulled. All of this is skillfully interwoven, however, in a rich positive tapestry that seeks to reassure the Jewish reader that God's broad plan is still in effect and still includes ultimate redemption of the Jewish people. (1) God intended three exiles for his people. (2) The third exile was intended to be the longest. (3) Redemption is inevitable. (4) The Messiah has not yet come. (5) When he does come, the Messiah will redeem all of Israel and will properly punish those who mistreated them during their subjugation. (6) Even at that point, the commandments will retain their eternal validity. Rabbi Mordechai clearly felt that his responsibility extended beyond rebuttal; he also felt required to reassure through the construction of a positive portrayal of the present and the future. Friar Paul's case of the prior advent of the Messiah implied an obvious negative corollary for Jewish fate. If the Messiah had already come and had not redeemed them, then the Jews were surely consigned to unremitting exile and degradation. Rabbi Mordechai was as sensitive to this negative corollary as he was to the original Christian claim of the prior advent of the Messiah. Addressing his fellow Jews directly, he was in a position to proceed beyond the circumscribed parameters of Rabbi Moses ben Nahman, and it is in this sense, therefore, that his work gives us even better insight into the defensive efforts on the part of the Jewish leadership of the mid-thirteenth century, efforts that included continual reassurance in the face of the new onslaught. Not only were the Christians wrong in their new thrusts but the old promises by which the Jews had long lived and in which they had long had confidence remained in force and augured better days to come.

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## The *Pugio Fidei*

The Barcelona confrontation constituted a serious self-imposed test for the new missionizing argumentation of Friar Paul Christian. As we have seen, the results were equivocal. Each side felt a measure of satisfaction with the outcome, along with a certain dissatisfaction. The ongoing preaching of Friar Paul Christian is a reflection of Christian satisfaction. Dissatisfaction is reflected in the extensive efforts to refine the new approach, efforts that culminated in Friar Raymond Martin's remarkable *Pugio Fidei*. Indeed, a useful perspective on this extremely important work is to see it as professional augmentation and refinement of the innovative but amateurish missionizing argumentation of Friar Paul. From this standpoint, the *Pugio Fidei* buttresses our argument for the seriousness of the new missionizing enterprise, for it is in many ways the magnum opus of medieval Christian missionizing among the Jews. No other work can match the *Pugio Fidei* for its dedicated effort to probe the Jewish psyche, for its massive collection of Jewish sources, or for its careful and sophisticated argumentation on the broadest possible range of theological issues. In all of this, the experience of Barcelona is clearly reflected. Every major criticism raised by the distinguished Jewish spokesman, Rabbi Moses ben Nahman, was heard, pondered, and addressed. As we shall see, much of the advance easily noted in the *Pugio Fidei* is simply the result of careful consideration of the issues raised by Rabbi Moses.

Friar Raymond Martin was an important figure in the missionizing school of Friar Raymond of Penyafort.<sup>[1]</sup> Like most members of this circle, his initial interest lay in proselytizing among the Muslims.<sup>[2]</sup> The events of 1263 seem to have led Friar Raymond into a concern with conversion of the Jews and with the Jewish texts through which such conversion might be achieved. It is not clear whether he was actually present at the Barcelona colloquy. By 1264, however, Friar Raymond was involved in the examination and expurgation of Jewish books.<sup>[3]</sup> For the next decade and a half, he was deeply immersed in rabbinic

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literature, composing his *Capistrum Judeorum* in 1267.<sup>[4]</sup> The culmination of this study was a comprehensive missionizing manual—the *Pugio Fidei*—based on utilization of rabbinic sources in the service of Christian truth.<sup>[5]</sup> Friar Raymond was a far different figure from Friar Paul Christian. Friar Paul seems to be simply a former Jew who used the knowledge gleaned in a traditional Jewish education for missionizing purposes. Friar Raymond, however, was one of a group of professional scholars devoted to the acquisition of all the knowledge necessary for the new missionizing enterprise. Jeremy Cohen has argued convincingly against the recurrent suggestion of Jewish origins for Friar Raymond.<sup>[6]</sup> Given the lack of Jewish background and, indeed, his prior involvement in proselytizing among the Muslims, the professionalism of the entire enterprise is apparent in the extent to which a relative newcomer to the field of Jewish literature and anti-Jewish argumentation became a master of the discipline. Again, this reflects the general dedication and abilities of a small but intense band of mid-thirteenth-century churchmen who had committed themselves thoroughly to the missionizing endeavor.

It should be emphasized that the *Pugio Fidei* represents the efforts of more than one individual. Saul Liebermann argued tellingly for a group of researchers whose work is embodied in the book.<sup>[7]</sup> Friar Raymond may have been the "principal investigator," but his achievement would have been impossible without the support of the rest of his research staff. Almost certainly the financial and personnel support reflected in the collaborative achievement of the *Pugio Fidei* flows from the missionizing circle at the hub of which sat the active and influential Raymond of Penyafort.

A few words about technical aspects of the *Pugio Fidei* are in order. The compendium is not addressed directly to the Jewish reader; it is a manual designed for missionizing preachers. It is

written in Latin, indicating that the anticipated readership was to be composed of such missionizers. Citations from rabbinic literature are given in the original, reflecting the extensive new scholarship in Jewish sources and the author's intention to afford the best possible foundation for the utilization of these sources. The Hebrew and Aramaic citations are followed by painstakingly accurate Latin translations. In many instances, the translation of key or problematic words or phrases is buttressed by appeal to medieval Jewish authorities such as Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac of Troyes or Rabbi David Kimhi. The goal is to provide an impeccably correct translation, not for the sake of disinter-

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ested scholarship but to obviate any potential Jewish objections. The author was obviously well aware of traditional Jewish scorn for questionable Christian renderings of authoritative texts and was determined to remove that issue from consideration. The proposed implications of the texts cited are then drawn and argued at length.

The range of Jewish sources cited is most impressive and reflects an expertise far beyond that of Friar Paul Christian or indeed any other previous Christian awareness of rabbinic literature. It has already been suggested that the wide-ranging knowledge of Jewish texts is a tribute to more than the impressive energy and intellect of Friar Raymond Martin; it represents a decade and a half of labor by a team of scholars, working with the backing of both ecclesiastical and lay authorities. Many of the texts cited by Friar Raymond are no longer extant in the versions he presents, giving rise to a modern controversy over the possible forgery of some of the citations in the work.<sup>[8]</sup> While specific cases may be difficult to decide, the overall impression of massive compilation of authentic rabbinic materials cannot be denied. What is more, in a work so committed to scrupulous translation, there would seem to be little point in fabricating texts that Jews could readily dismiss as inauthentic. Indeed, the stance of mocking superciliousness adopted by Nahmanides toward Friar Paul disappears among Jews aware of the new knowledge amassed by Friar Raymond.<sup>[9]</sup>

The basic strategy of the *Pugio Fidei* is the one we have already identified as the innovative tactic introduced by Friar Paul Christian. Out of the range of potential bases for argumentation with the Jews—scriptural, philosophical, and empirical—Friar Raymond committed himself to the use of scriptural arguments, understanding fully that the Jews had their own rich exegetical tradition that would have to be studied and exploited. Again, like Friar Paul, Friar Raymond utilized freestanding rabbinic dicta as well. In a striking way, Friar Raymond exploited these lines of argumentation over a very broad spectrum of issues, including those matters traditionally discussed from an empirical moral-ethical or historical perspective. The argumentation based on scriptural-rabbinic and pure rabbinic grounds extended eventually into the areas of the status of Jewish law and religious practice and the historic condition and fate of the Jewish people.

The *Pugio Fidei* is both comprehensive and well organized. The entire second part is devoted to the crucial argument that the Messiah has already come.<sup>[10]</sup> As noted earlier, this is the lynchpin of the new Christian missionizing. Were the Jews to be convinced that the Mes-

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siah had already come, they would in fact be recognizing Jesus as that Messiah and abandoning the Jewish faith. The third part of the *Pugio Fidei* is divided into three sections. The first seeks to prove, as always, on the basis of rabbinic texts, the concept of the Trinity;<sup>[11]</sup> the second seeks to substantiate the Christian doctrine of original sin and the resultant need of all humanity for

redemption.<sup>[12]</sup> Building on these two assertions, Friar Raymond then argues, in the third and final section of Part III, that God sent his word or his son or his wisdom for the redemption of humanity and to prove key Christian dogma such as the virgin birth, the passion of Jesus, his resurrection, the efficacy of baptism, and the significance of the eucharist.<sup>[13]</sup> In this final section of Part III, he also addresses himself to the issues of Jewish law and the historic fate of the Jewish people.<sup>[14]</sup>

As Friar Raymond proceeds to establish basic tenets of Christianity from Jewish sources in the third section of Part III of the *Pugio Fidei*, he, in a sense, moves chronologically through the life span of Jesus, linking his claims with those theses that he already proved—or set out to prove—in the previous sections. He begins with the assertion that God "had to send his word or his son or his wisdom" for the salvation of humanity, building on the notion of original sin and inevitable punishment which he had argued in the previous section. He next claims that the Messiah is God, thereby linking section three of Part III with the arguments already encountered in section one. In several chapters, he explores the ramifications of the notion of a Messiah-Deity who redeems sinful mankind. He then proceeds to argue the doctrine of virgin birth and to establish the proper genealogy of the Messiah-Deity. Chapter 11 of this section of the *Pugio Fidei* is devoted to proof of the assertion that "our Lord Jesus Christ did not come to abolish the laws and the prophets, but to fulfill them." Related to this is chapter 12, which continues to assert that "the ceremonial laws should not be observed literally." From this point, Friar Raymond buttresses, still on the basis of rabbinic sources, key Christian practices and beliefs, including baptism, penitence, the eucharist, the passion, the descent of Jesus into hell, resurrection, and ascension. He concludes on a negative note—the iniquity and punishment of the Jewish people.

In all of this, there is again the sense of building on the foundations laid by Friar Paul Christian. Friar Paul had projected a positive and negative thrust to his argumentation, attempting to prove, on the one hand, key Christian notions concerning Jesus and, on the other, seeking to dismiss the cornerstone of Jewish life, Jewish law. Friar Ray-

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mond retained the dual thrust but does so far more fully, arguing for a very broad range of Christian beliefs and practices and expanding the critique of Judaism to include not only an attack on Jewish law but a damning statement on Jewish status and fate as well.

The growth and development of the new missionizing approach is reflected in more than just this expansion of the volume of source material collected and the range of issues addressed. Equally—indeed more—significant is the enhanced sophistication exhibited in the utilization of rabbinic materials.

Evidence of this augmented sophistication is found, first of all, in the elaboration by Friar Raymond of a basic view of rabbinic literature. In his 1263 disputation, Friar Paul nowhere introduced general observations on the talmudic sources he cites, observations that would enable him to counter contradictory evidence extracted from the vast "sea of the Talmud." Indeed, it was his rival, Rabbi Moses, who insisted on discussing the nature of rabbinic literature, establishing the two categories of halachic or legal materials, which every Jew was obliged to accept, and aggadic or nonlegal materials, which were inherently more personal and assent to which might be suspended under certain circumstances.<sup>[15]</sup> In contrast to Friar Paul's cavalier attitude to the materials he sought to exploit, Friar Raymond was careful to adumbrate at the outset a view of rabbinic literature and the pitfalls associated with it. Friar Raymond begins by noting—and rejecting out of hand—the traditional Jewish view of the Oral Law as given by God on Sinai and passed on through the generations until committed to writing by the rabbis. For Friar Raymond, this view, which posits the divine truth of all rabbinic statements, is contradicted by "the innumerable absurdities which are found in the Talmud" and "can be considered nothing other than the insanity of a deranged mind."<sup>[16]</sup> In place of this unacceptable notion of the Oral Law, Friar Raymond suggests a more complex stance. There are in the Talmud statements "which recognize the truth,

which in all ways exhibit and present the doctrine of the prophets and the holy patriarchs, which—as shall be clear in this book—exhibit strongly and unequivocally Christian truth, and which destroy and confound the perfidious faith of presentday Jews."<sup>[12]</sup> Friar Paul is willing to see such talmudic statements as divinely inspired and accurately transmitted. In contradistinction, there is much material that is contrary to and incompatible with religious truth. Such material can lay no claim to divine provenance or to human acceptance. This distinction will be critical for Friar Ray-

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mond. Because of the greater mastery of rabbinic sources reflected in the *Pugio Fidei*, Friar Raymond will adduce some rabbinic statements to prove Christian truth and, at the same time, reject other rabbinic views as perverse and false. In a real sense, the growing mastery of talmudic literature brought Friar Raymond to approximately the same pragmatic position taken by Rabbi Moses a decade and a half earlier: talmudic literature is vast; some of it is acceptable (for the purposes of one faith or the other), and some of it is not. Friar Raymond's development beyond Friar Paul in this regard is clear.

The same kind of maturation can be discerned in the substance of the arguments advanced. To appreciate this development, let us focus on one major issue, the argument that the Messiah had already come. Both Friar Paul and Friar Raymond began their cases with this crucial contention. Friar Paul had attempted to prove this assertion by utilizing one key biblical verse, Genesis 49:10, with relevant rabbinic exegesis. He had further attempted to buttress his case by citing two freestanding rabbinic dicta. Let us examine the extension of this argumentation in the *Pugio Fidei*.

At the outset, Friar Raymond strengthens the case considerably, examining four major biblical passages and their related rabbinic exegesis. These passages are Daniel 9, Genesis 49:10, Daniel 2, and Malachi 3:1–2. Each of these important passages is examined at great length, with the case for its Christological implications based on scrutiny of extensive rabbinic exegesis. Let us examine in some detail the case erected on the basis of Genesis 49:10, enabling us to view comparatively the approach of the two Dominican friars.

Friar Paul, it will be recalled, had combined this important verse with the rabbinic identification of the scepter as the exilarchs of Babylonia and the legislator as the patriarchs of Palestine, arguing that rabbinic understanding of the verse shows that political power had remained vested in Judah until after the advent of Jesus as Messiah. Later lack of such political power must therefore be taken as proof that the Messiah had already come. Nahmanides attacked this argument in double fashion, first contending that Friar Paul had distorted the meaning of the rabbinic passage. He counterclaimed that the rabbis, in their exegesis, had been addressing only a specific legal issue, for which they sought a proof text in this verse; they had not, however, been suggesting overall exegesis of the verse. In passing, Nahmanides further noted, as he often did, that this rabbinic exegesis in no way supported Christian truth. Even granting Friar Paul's reading of the rabbinic exegesis, the phenomenon of ongoing Jewish polit-

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ical power through the age of early Christianity and its subsequent annulment would indicate the advent of the Messiah many centuries subsequent to the lifetime of Jesus. We have already noted that this Nahmanidean thrust was both widely recurring and highly effective.

Friar Raymond's use of Genesis 49:10 and rabbinic exegesis of this key verse is far sharper. He begins by quoting the verse and translating it in the accepted Christian manner, understanding *Shiloh* as a reference to the Messiah. Immediately, however, he buttresses this

explication of the text by appeal to the traditional Jewish translation in Aramaic, arguing, in effect, that the allegedly Christological interpretation is reflected in Jewish literary tradition itself. Friar Raymond singles out two key terms for special attention: (1) *shevet*, which he takes to mean political authority, as attested in the Targum and buttressed by Psalms 45:7, and (2) *mehokek*, which he translates as scribe or legislator, as supported by the Targum and buttressed by Deuteronomy 33:21 and its Targum and by Isaiah 33:22.<sup>[18]</sup> In sum, Friar Raymond contends, from Jewish exegesis of the verse, that it points unequivocally to the messianic replacement of Jewish political authority.

At this point, Friar Raymond introduces the first of two rabbinic views which, in his eyes, make Genesis 49:10 clear prediction of Jesus as Messiah. The first of these two views is quoted from two midrashic sources. According to the first and lengthier of the two:

"The scepter shall not depart from Judah"—this is the Chamber of the Hewn stone, which was given as part of the portion of Judah, as is said: "He rejected the clan of Joseph; he did not choose the tribe of Ephraim. He did choose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion which he loved"<sup>[19]</sup> —the mount which excels in Torah. It is further said: "The Lord loves the gates of Zion"<sup>[20]</sup> —gates which excel in the law. "Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet"—these are the inhabitants of Jabez who guard the laws of Israel in the Great Sanhedrin which sits in the Chamber of Hewn Stones, in the portion of Judah, as is said: "And these are the clans of scribes living at Jabez."<sup>[21]</sup> What then is the meaning of "the scepter shall not depart from Judah?" It is to teach that the Sanhedrin was only given power to judge capital cases so long as it was located in the Chamber of Hewn Stones. Since it was exiled from there elsewhere, capital cases have been annulled, as is said: "You shall carry out the verdict that is announced to you from that place which the Lord chose."<sup>[22]</sup> "Until Shiloh comes"—this means the messiah.<sup>[23]</sup>

Thus, this rabbinic tradition seems to relate the advent of the Messiah to the location of the Great Sanhedrin in the Chamber of the Hewn

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Stones. At the point of departure from this sacred place, the Great Sanhedrin was to lose its jurisdiction over capital cases and, more significant for Friar Raymond and his purposes, the Messiah was to arrive.<sup>[24]</sup>

Friar Raymond does not proceed immediately to close the circle. Instead, he quotes a number of talmudic passages that indicate the reality of a variety of Jewish courts, focusing in particular on the Great Sanhedrin of seventy-one judges, and of the infliction of capital punishment. Having established these realities, he then quotes two sources that speak of the suspension of capital cases prior to the destruction of the Second Temple.

The rabbis taught: "Forty years prior to the destruction of the Temple, capital cases were abolished."<sup>[25]</sup>

Forty years prior to the destruction of the Temple, the Sanhedrin was exiled and established itself at Hanut. What are the implications [of this move]? Rav Isaac bar Avdimi said: "To teach that they no longer judged cases involving fines." You suggest that the [move relates to] cases involving fines? Rather, [the move teaches that] they no longer judged capital cases. Rashi explains: "Does the Chamber of Hewn Stones cause [suspension of] cases involving fines? Rather, [it causes suspension of] capital cases. For capital cases cannot be judged in any locale; they can only be adjudicated when the Great Sanhedrin is located in the Chamber of Hewn Stones, as is said: "You shall promptly repair to the place which the Lord your God has chosen."<sup>[26]</sup>

Friar Raymond's case is far more meticulous and precise than that of Friar Paul. He argues (1) that a clear rabbinic tradition understood Genesis 49:10 to apply to the Great Sanhedrin, its location in the Chamber of Hewn Stones, and its authority to decide capital cases; (2) movement out of the Chamber of Hewn Stones would mean the suspension of the power to decide capital cases; (3) such movement and such suspension would be related to the advent of the Messiah; and (4) such movement and such suspension did in fact take place forty years prior to the destruction of the Second Temple; thus, (5) the messianic advent predicted in Genesis 49:10 as a concomitant of the removal of the Great Sanhedrin and suspension of its prerogatives in capital cases must have taken place at that juncture. The reasoning is far more rigorous than Friar Paul's, and the date of forty years prior to the destruction of the Second Temple coincides nicely with the actual chronology of the life and death of Jesus.<sup>[27]</sup>

Having advanced one rabbinic tradition concerning Genesis 49:10 and having argued that this understanding of the verse proves the advent of the Messiah shortly before the destruction of the Second Temple, Friar Raymond proceeds to a second such rabbinic tradition, in this case the one used earlier by Friar Paul. Friar Raymond begins by citing the brief passage from Sanhedrin: "It is taught: 'The scepter shall not depart from Judah'—these are the exilarchs in Babylonia who rule the people with a scepter. 'And the ruler's staff'—these are the descendants of Hillel who teach Torah to Israel."<sup>[28]</sup> Once again, Friar Raymond exhibits a concern with buttressing the accuracy of an exegetical tradition, in this case that of the Talmud. To this end, he quotes Rabbi David Kimhi on the meaning of *shevet* and *mehokek*, in an effort to indicate the reasonableness of the rabbinic exegesis.<sup>[29]</sup>

Friar Raymond was far from satisfied with his predecessor's use of this equation of scepter with the exilarchs and ruler's staff with the patriarchs or rabbis. Rather than pointing simply to the contemporary lack of exilarchs and patriarchs, as Friar Paul had done, Friar Raymond cites a related talmudic passage:

Herod was a servant of the Hasmonean dynasty. He desired a certain young woman. One day he heard a heavenly voice saying: "Any servant who now rebels will be successful." He rebelled and killed all of his masters, but left alive the young woman. When the young woman saw that he wished to marry her, she ascended the roof and lifted her voice and said: "Anyone who claims to descend from the Hasmonean dynasty is a servant, for no one remains from that dynasty but this young woman." The young woman then fell from the roof to the ground and died. . . . Herod then said: "Who teaches: 'Be sure to set as king over yourselves one of your own people!'"<sup>[30]</sup> They said to him: "The rabbis." He arose and killed all the rabbis, leaving only Baba ben Bota to afford him counsel.<sup>[31]</sup>

This passage, which depicts Herod's alleged extermination of both the Hasmonean house and the rabbis, is taken by Friar Raymond as evidence of the fulfillment of the prophecy of Jacob as understood in the second rabbinic tradition: the scepter, which the Talmud had seen as a reference to the exilarchs and which Friar Raymond proposed as a reference to the Hasmoneans, and the ruler's staff, which both took as a reference to the rabbis, had supposedly disappeared as a result of the Herodian onslaught. This disappearance must then mean the advent of the Messiah at precisely that point, that is, the reign of Herod. Once again, the vagueness of Friar Paul's argumentation gives way to

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sharper and more precise use of the rabbinic texts. Of course, this second argument is far less impressive than the first. The obvious exaggeration of the rabbinic tale and the replacement of the exilarchs with the Hasmoneans weaken the case. Our general sense, however, of Friar Raymond's restless search for greater rigor and precision is once more supported by his revision of his predecessor's contention.

The same enhanced sophistication can be noted in Friar Raymond's use of freestanding rabbinic dicta. Remaining with the arguments for the advent of the Messiah, we recall that Friar Paul had adduced two such rabbinic dicta to prove that the Messiah had already come. The first associated the advent of the Messiah with the destruction of the Temple; the second reported an alleged conversation between Elijah and Rabbi Joshua ben Levi.<sup>[32]</sup> Friar Paul's understanding of both of these aggadot was quickly attacked by Nahmanides. The second involved the simple reading of the text itself.

Indeed it is indicated explicitly here that he has not come. For Rabbi Joshua ben Levi asked Elijah when he *would* [italics mine] come. Likewise Rabbi Joshua ben Levi asked the Messiah himself: "When *will* [again, italics mine] you come?" Thus he has not yet come. Rather he has only been born, according to the simple meaning of these aggadot. But I do not even believe in them.<sup>[33]</sup>

The first evoked from Rabbi Moses his standard argument that, were the statement taken literally, it would refute rather than support Christian contentions. Since the destruction of the Temple took place well after the death of Jesus, association of the Messiah's birth with the catastrophe of the year 70 negates Christological claims.

Clearly, Friar Raymond was well aware of the weaknesses of the specific aggadot adduced by Friar Paul. While remaining faithful to the latter's approach, Friar Raymond was insistent on dismissing both of the rabbinic statements utilized in 1263. As noted earlier, the foundation for such dismissal had been carefully laid in Friar Raymond's broad stance on rabbinic literature. For him, such statements were indicative of "the innumerable absurdities which are found in the Talmud." He does not, however, reject these materials arbitrarily, nor does he cite Jewish arguments against their utilization. Rather, he quotes them carefully and finds alleged inner flaws.

The process of discrediting these problematic aggadot begins with an examination of the connection between the destruction of the Second Temple and the birth of the Messiah. Friar Raymond quotes three

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versions of this tradition. The first tells the story of the Jew, the oxen, and the Arab. To this story is appended an observation by Rabbi Abun: "Why is it necessary to learn this from this Arab? Indeed this is clearly stated in Scriptures, for it is written: 'And the Lebanon trees shall fall in their majesty.'<sup>[34]</sup> What is written immediately afterward? 'But a shoot shall go forth from Jesse.'<sup>[35]</sup> The second version of the tradition that links the destruction of the temple with the birth of the Messiah is shorter and simply establishes a scriptural basis for the linkage.

Rabbi Samuel bar Nahman said: "Whence do you know that, on the very day that the Messiah was born, the Temple was destroyed? For it is said: 'Before she labored, she was delivered; before her pangs, she bore a son. Who ever heard the like; who ever witnessed such events?'"<sup>[36]</sup> Indeed, at the moment when the Temple was destroyed, the Jews cried out like a woman in childbirth, as is said: 'I hear a voice as of one in travail, anguish as of a woman bearing her first child.'<sup>[37]</sup>

The third and lengthiest version tells the story of Elijah hearing a heavenly voice announcing the destruction of the Temple and the birth of the Messiah. When Elijah asked where the Messiah had been born, he was told that the birth had taken place in Bethlehem. He visited Bethlehem and found a woman and her newborn son; he informed her that the infant would serve as the savior of Israel. The aggadah ends with a subsequent visit by Elijah to Bethlehem five years later.

Five years later Elijah said: "I shall go and see the savior of Israel, whether he is growing in the form of a king or in the form of a heavenly angel." He went and found the woman standing at the entrance to her house. He said to her: "My daughter, what is the lad like?" She said to him: "My master, did I not tell you that it was a great misfortune that, on the very day on which he was born, the Temple was destroyed? Indeed, he has legs, but cannot walk; he has eyes, but cannot see; he has a mouth, but cannot speak. Behold he lies like a stone." While he was still speaking, a wind blew from the four corners of the earth and deposited the lad in the Great Sea. Elijah rent his clothes and tore his hair and cried out: "Woe! The salvation of Israel has been lost!" A heavenly voice went forth and said to him: "Elijah, it is not as you think. Rather, four hundred years he shall dwell in the Great Sea, eighty years in the column of smoke near the descendants of Korah, eighty years at the entrance to Rome; the remaining years he shall visit all the great kingdoms until the end of days."<sup>[38]</sup>

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To these three aggadic traditions that link the birth of the Messiah with the destruction of the Second Temple, Friar Raymond adds two other rabbinic texts that seem to reflect the advent of the Messiah. The first is the story of Rabbi Joshua ben Levi and the Messiah, which Friar Paul had utilized. The second is a homily on Malachi 3:16.

Rabbi Cohen and Rabbi Joshua said: "In the past one would perform a commandment and the prophet would write it down. Now when one performs a commandment, who writes it down? Elijah writes it down and King Messiah and the Holy One

blessed be he affix the seal, as is written: 'The Lord has heard and noted it, and a scroll of remembrance has been written at his behest concerning those who revere the Lord and esteem his name.' "<sup>[40]</sup>

All of these statements, including the two utilized by Friar Paul, evoke Friar Raymond's wrath. "Behold what sorts of things the Jews concoct concerning their alleged Messiah."<sup>[41]</sup> He begins his specific criticisms by negating the two efforts to link the birth of the messiah with the destruction of the Temple on scriptural grounds. Friar Raymond rejects the proposed exegesis of Isaiah 10:34–11:1 and 66:7.<sup>[42]</sup> As to the general notion of advent of the Messiah at or near the time of the destruction of the Temple, Friar Raymond argues that, were this normative Jewish belief, the rabbis would never have supported the messianic pretensions of Simon bar Kokhba, as he had described in detail in an earlier chapter of his opus.<sup>[43]</sup> To be sure, Friar Raymond had just argued that rabbinic exegesis of key biblical verses proves that the rabbis indeed believed that the Messiah had already come, and he will soon adduce his own freestanding rabbinic materials to prove the same point. In these cases, however, one could contend that true doctrine was expressed but not fully understood by its Jewish expositors. The overt statements concerning the birth of the Messiah defy any misunderstanding. The subsequent actions of the Jews at the time of Simon bar Kokhba indicate that in fact the Jewish world rejected out of hand the statements Friar Raymond had cited. Finally, Friar Raymond claims that there was in fact no known Jewish messianic pretender from the time of the destruction of the Second Temple. The only known messianic figure of the period was Jesus of Nazareth, to whom the cited materials clearly bear no reference.<sup>[44]</sup> For Friar Raymond, the result of these considerations is absolute repudiation of all these rabbinic dicta.<sup>[45]</sup>

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While repudiating the specific aggadot adduced by Friar Paul Christian, Friar Raymond remained convinced of the validity of the approach. What he proceeds to do, therefore, is to present further talmudic material that does, to his mind, clearly indicate the advent of the Messiah, indeed, at precisely the time of the appearance of Jesus.

Friar Raymond's first such proof of the advent of the Messiah at the time of Jesus derives from two rabbinic versions of a broad cosmological scheme. According to this scheme, world history was supposed to divide neatly into units of two thousand years each—two thousand years of vanity or lack of Torah, two thousand years of Torah, and two thousand years of messianic times. While both of these versions agree on the basic structure of human history, they end on differing notes. The version that Friar Raymond quotes from Tractate Sanhedrin ends "But because of our extensive sins, the number of years have diverged as they have diverged,"<sup>[46]</sup> meaning that the messianic period, which was to have begun in 4000 A.M. (= 240 C.E. ), was postponed. The version quoted by Friar Raymond from Tractate Avodah Zarah concludes "But because of our extensive sins, the number of years have diverged by seven hundred and fourteen,"<sup>[47]</sup> meaning a messianic date of 4714 A.M. (= 954 C.E. ). Friar Raymond argues that the discrepancy in endings proves that neither was part of the original cosmological tradition. To this rabbinic tradition, reached through elimination of divergent accretions, Friar Raymond adds a second, drawn from exegesis of Isaiah 60:22, "I the Lord will speed it in due time." "Rabbi Joshua ben Levi juxtaposed 'in due time' with 'I will speed it'—if they are worthy, I will speed it; if not, [it will come about] in due time."<sup>[48]</sup> For Friar Raymond, this meant that the messianic arrival could be advanced; it could not, however, be retarded. The result for Friar Raymond is as follows: (1) there is an authentic rabbinic tradition that posits the coming of the Messiah in the year 4000 A.M. (= 240 C.E. ); (2) since this date has long since passed, the Messiah must already long ago have arrived; (3) since Jesus is the only significant figure who fulfills the biblical prophecies associated with the Messiah, then he must in fact be the Messiah; (4) the discrepancy between the predicted year 240 C.E. and the earlier appearance of Jesus is to be explained by the rabbinic view that the advent of the Messiah could be advanced but not retarded. This proof from rabbinic literature has two advantages over those proposed by Friar Paul Christian. In the first place, it is subtler and hence does not allow for the objec-

tion drawn from Jewish support for the messianic pretensions of Simon bar Kokhba. Moreover, it offers precision in dating the Messiah at the very time of the appearance of Jesus.

Friar Raymond's second proof for the advent of the Messiah, based on freestanding rabbinic sources, is drawn from statements concerning world political history and the realities of that history. He cited two conclusions drawn from the same biblical verse, Micah 5:2. According to the first, "the Son of David will not come until the Wicked Kingdom [Rome] shall spread its power over Israel for nine months."<sup>[48]</sup> According to the second, "the Son of David will not come until the Wicked Kingdom shall spread its power over the entire world for nine months."<sup>[49]</sup> To these two brief statements, Friar Raymond juxtaposes two more: (1) a brief note that one hundred eighty years prior to the destruction of the Second Temple, the Wicked Kingdom spread its power over Israel,<sup>[50]</sup> and (2) a lengthier depiction of the ten rulers who have ruled or will rule over the entire world, a list that begins with God and ends with the Messiah. This second source is the more significant for Friar Raymond, because the ninth of these universal monarchs is none other than "Caesar Augustus, emperor of Rome."<sup>[51]</sup> Friar Raymond thus concludes: (1) the Messiah could not come until Rome had ruled over Israel and the world for nine months; (2) Roman rule over the entire world was achieved under Augustus; (3) therefore, the Messiah must have been born at the time of Augustus; and (4) the only messianic figure from precisely that period is Jesus of Nazareth.

The third of Friar Raymond's proofs—from freestanding rabbinic dicta—for the advent of the Messiah is actually quite close to the second. He begins by quoting a passage from Bereshit Rabbah, which illustrates the importance of honoring one's parents by describing the bounteous rewards heaped on Esau for his noble treatment of his father, Isaac. Among these rewards was even the delay of redemption through the Messiah. "And whence do you know that this honor [extended by Esau to his father] shall delay the salvation which will come about through King Messiah? For it is said: 'For thus said the Lord of Hosts—he who sent me after honor.'<sup>[52]</sup> After the Holy One blessed be he repays Esau the reward for the honor which he extended to his father, he will send me [i.e., the Messiah]."<sup>[53]</sup> Again, Father Raymond draws on the notion of maximal Roman power during the reign of Augustus and argues that the rabbinic texts reflect the advent of the Messiah during that period, indicating once more that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah depicted in these rabbinic sources.

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Thus, after repudiating a number of rabbinic traditions concerning the advent of the Messiah, Friar Raymond finds others that, for him, are both reasonable and reflect the arrival of the Messiah at a date identical with that of the appearance of Jesus of Nazareth. The valuable new approach of Friar Paul Christian had once more been substantially improved and refined.

Thus, a close look at one particular issue shows us how much more sophisticated the arguments advanced by Friar Raymond Martin in the *Pugio Fidei* had become. The combination of extensive augmentation of rabbinic source materials, broadening of the issues addressed to cover the entire range of Christian dogma and practice, and greater precision in argumentation points to a concerted campaign to build on the foundations laid by Friar Paul Christian in establishing truly effective new missionizing argumentation for use among the Jews.

We have already noted a number of times that serious missionizing argumentation always included both a positive and negative thrust, a case for one's own faith and a disparagement of the religious tradition of the opponent group. The specific argumentation that we have analyzed thus far has revolved around the effort to prove a major Christian assertion, that the Messiah has already come. As indicated earlier, Friar Paul had intended to include in the Barcelona confrontation

a major negative statement about the Jews and their faith, the contention that Jewish law—the pillar of Jewish life—had lost all validity. That issue was never joined at Barcelona; it was, however, clearly pursued by Friar Paul in his subsequent preaching and is extensively addressed in the *Mahazik Emunah*. Not surprisingly, in the *Pugio Fidei*, Friar Raymond treats this issue at great length. To gain a fuller sense of this negative argumentation, let us examine in some detail Friar Raymond's case concerning Jewish law.

He begins his case with the introduction of major Jewish objections to the notion of suspension of the ceremonial law and with his refutation of these objections. He focuses on the Jewish claim, based on key biblical verses, that aspects of the ceremonial law constitute an eternal covenant between God and the people of Israel. Four sets of issues and four sets of biblical verses are identified: (1) circumcision—Genesis 17:13; (2) sabbath—Exodus 31:16; (3) Passover—Exodus 12:14 and 12:24; and (4) Pentecost, the Day of Atonement, and Tabernacles—Leviticus 23. The crucial word in all these verses is the Hebrew '*olam*', which, Friar Raymond asserts, means "eternal" according to the Jews and "for the ages" (but not eternal) according to Christians and "according to the truth of the matter."<sup>[54]</sup>

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Having established these Jewish objections, Friar Raymond proceeds to rebut them. His technique, standard for the *Pugio Fidei*, depends not on assertion of Christian exegesis of the term '*olam*' but rather on proving that Jewish sources themselves exhibit the Christian—and, for him, correct—rendition of the term. The evidence he produces is the following: (1) I Kings 1:22 and the gloss of Rashi on that verse; (2) Deuteronomy 15:17 with the rabbinic comment in Midrash Devarim and the gloss of Rashi; (3) Numbers 19:21 and the gloss of Rashi; (4) the statement of the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Kiddushin, on Deuteronomy 15:17; and (5) the observation of Rabbi David Kimhi on the meaning of the term '*olam*' in Deuteronomy 15:17. The net result of these rabbinic sources is, for Friar Raymond, confirmation of his contention that '*olam*' does not mean eternity, or at least need not mean eternity, and that its use in verses regarding circumcision, the sabbath, and the rest of the ceremonial law does not imply everlasting performance of the commandments.<sup>[55]</sup>

To be sure, thus far Friar Raymond has merely eliminated Jewish objections and indicated that the ceremonial law need not be everlasting, as the Jews claim. He next makes a more positive case, arguing from Rabbi David Kimhi that there are three Hebrew terms that are used to designate eternity: (1) *nezah*<sup>[56]</sup>, (2) *selah*, and (3) *'ad*. "Since therefore none of these three terms is used for the law, when there is mention of circumcision, sabbath, sacrifices, and other ceremonial laws, but rather [the text uses] '*olam*', that is 'for the ages,' as has been shown, thus it is clear beyond doubt that the ceremonial laws were not meant to be observed literally forever but rather up to an appointed time, that is up to the advent of the Messiah."<sup>[56]</sup>

Even with this more positive assertion, Friar Raymond does not rest his case. He continues by introducing a number of rabbinic texts that speak of a new Torah in the future epoch. Specifically, he cites (1) Midrash Kohelet on Ecclesiastes 2:1, which speaks of "the new Torah of the world to come"; (2) Midrash Kohelet on Ecclesiastes 11:8, which speaks of the "Torah of the Messiah"; and (3) the *locus classicus* in Jeremiah 31, which expatiates on "the new covenant of the days to come," which Friar Raymond, basing himself on the Mekhilta, asserts to be yet another reference to a new law.<sup>[57]</sup>

This abstract notion of a new law is given more precise content through a citation from Midrash Kohelet, on Ecclesiastes 1:11, which speaks of an eventual remembrance not of the miracles of Egypt or even of the miracles that followed the exodus from Egypt but rather of

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ultimate remembrance of the miracles of the world to come, closing with a quotation from Jeremiah 23:7.<sup>[58]</sup> This tradition is reinforced by two further texts, one from the Palestinian Talmud and one from the Babylonian Talmud. The former of these two parallel sources relates, in the name of ben Zoma, that

Israel will no longer recall the exodus from Egypt in the future, during the days of the Messiah. What is the reason for this? "Assuredly a time is coming—declares the Lord—when it shall no more be said: 'As the Lord lives, who brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt,' but rather 'As the Lord lives, who brought out and led the offsprings of the house of Israel from the northland and from all the lands to which I have banished them.' "<sup>[59]</sup>

Thus one shift in the new law will be a shift in the pattern of communal recollection, with remembrance of the early miracles in Israelite history giving way—and properly so—to celebration of later and greater miracles wrought by God through his Messiah. Given Friar Raymond's earlier extensive case for the advent of the Messiah, he then concludes that Jewish recollection of the early miracles, such as the exodus from Egypt, should indeed give way to new recollections. The old ceremonial law had lost its meaning and validity.

What Friar Raymond had thus undertaken for the festivals of recollection, he does for such ritual obligations as circumcision and the sabbath. In all these instances, the procedure is the same—extensive citation of rabbinic sources designed to prove that the old law was intended to give way to a new and spiritualized meaning. While it would be tedious to follow Friar Raymond's argumentation in all these areas, one further set of claims does merit our attention. He argues that it had in fact been God's will that the ceremonial law be historically suspended through the agency of Roman decree. The Romans were intended to serve as a vehicle of divine will in suspending the superannuated law. In the face of this divinely ordained Roman-executed suspension of Jewish law, the Jews insisted on renewing for themselves the demands of the law, not, however, in fulfillment of divine commandment but in contravention of God's desires. This is a most unusual and audacious claim and warrants a brief look at the sources mustered in its support.

Friar Raymond introduces this new tack with a citation from Midrash Tehillim on Psalms 75:11, which reads "All the horns of the wicked I will cut; but the horns of the righteous will be lifted up." The

midrash proceeds to elaborate ten horns granted by God to Israel: (1) the horn of Abraham; (2) the horn of Isaac; (3) the horn of Joseph; (4) the horn of Moses; (5) the horn of prophecy; (6) the horn of Torah; (7) the horn of the priesthood; (8) the horn of the levitical family; (9) the horn of Jerusalem; and (10) the horn of the King Messiah. Having established these ten bounties, the midrash then suggests:

Since Israel has sinned, these [ten horns] were taken from them and given to the gentiles, as is said: "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and exceedingly strong; and it has great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces and stamped the residue with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns."<sup>[60]</sup> For the gentiles of the world were allegorized in these beasts. Indeed, when the horns of the gentiles are in existence, then the horns of Israel are cut down, as is said: "In blazing anger, he has cut down all the horns of Israel."<sup>[61]</sup>

Friar Raymond has taken a midrash designed to warn and chastise Jewish listeners by suggesting a recurrent oscillation in the fate of the Jews and the gentiles, based on Jewish sin or virtue, and has transformed it into a rejection of the Jews and a permanent suspension of many aspects of Jewish life, including Jewish law.

A second source is adduced by Friar Raymond to argue more specifically for divine suspension of Jewish law.

How God removed the legal requirements from the Jews through the agency of the Romans, especially circumcision and the sabbath, and how the devil restored these two and other [such legalisms] is reflected in their own literature in the Talmud, in Tractate Me'ilah, in the chapter Kodshe Mizbeah.<sup>[62]</sup> [62]

The story quoted by Friar Raymond involves efforts by the Jews to overturn the Roman decrees against Jewish law. The key element in the story concerns the visit of Rabbi Simon bar Yohai and Rabbi Eliezer ben Yose to the Roman emperor. On their way to this crucial encounter, they were asked by a demon if they would like his assistance, which was accepted. The demon then infected the emperor's daughter and was subsequently exorcised by Rabbi Simon bar Yohai. In gratitude, the emperor promised to grant any wish the rabbi might make. His request was for the annulment of the imperial edict against Jewish law, and this request was speedily granted. Friar Raymond concludes:

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Now let your good sense perceive, O reader, how, through these two traditions it is evident that God removed from the Jews, through the agency of the Romans, sabbath and circumcision and other ceremonials. "In blazing anger he has cut down all the horns of Israel," of which one was the law, as was indicated above. He never restored these to them, neither through his own agency nor by the angels nor by any other sacred figure. Rather, the Jews themselves regained circumcision, sabbath, and the rest through diabolical miracles, as has been shown in the preceding tradition. No one therefore should observe any longer—unless he be thoroughly demonic—those things which God removed and the devil so liberally and freely restored to the Jews by involving himself in obvious fashion.<sup>[63]</sup> [63]

This is a fascinating instance of Friar Raymond's exploitation of aggadic materials.

Friar Raymond makes a second major attack on Jewish beliefs, this one aimed at Jewish status and hopes for the future. As we have noted earlier, implicit in the claim that the Messiah has already come is the concomitant assertion that Jewish fate is sealed and that Jewish hopes for future betterment are vain. In the previous chapter, it was shown that Friar Paul's assertion of the prior advent of the Messiah elicited from Rabbi Mordechai ben Joseph both rebuttal and reassurance to his fellow Jews that the divine scheme of history still promised them future salvation.<sup>[64]</sup> [64] True to his goal of providing argumentation on every significant issue, Friar Raymond was not content with the implicit corollary of Jewish hopelessness; in the concluding chapters of his opus, he strove to provide extensive rabbinic materials that might be utilized to argue the case explicitly. In the process, what Friar Raymond did was to advance traditional Christian claims of downtrodden Jewish status, the meaning of this status, and the utter hopelessness of the Jewish situation, claims that generally rested on an empirical foundation, and to buttress these traditional allegations with his new-style recourse to talmudic texts. We shall not follow Friar Raymond's case in great detail but shall restrict the discussion to the crucial elements only.

Friar Raymond begins with a verse from Hosea, which, he claims, the Jews have distorted through their pointing of the Hebrew test.<sup>[65]</sup> [65] The Jews traditionally understand that verse to mean "Woe to them indeed when I turn away from them." According to Friar Raymond, rabbinic falsification through punctuation obscures the true meaning

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of the verse, which is, "Woe to them when I take on flesh."<sup>[66]</sup> [66] According to him, it is in the light of this true meaning of the verse that the prophet's concluding warning must be understood: "For their evil deeds I will drive them out of my house. I will accept them no more; all their officials are disloyal."<sup>[67]</sup> [67] Thus, in Friar Raymond's reading, the paradigmatic statement of Israel's sin and punishment is contained in these verses, properly understood. To be sure, this is not precisely use of rabbinic exegesis to produce a Christological statement; it is, rather, exposure of alleged rabbinic tampering that was intended to obscure the essential meaning of an important scriptural text.

Friar Raymond does proceed to adduce more direct rabbinic evidence for what he sees as the Jewish situation. He raises the question of the precise nature of the Jewish sin that produced the terrible results that he (in accord with Christian tradition in general) perceived in post-Second Temple Jewish fate. The answer, for Friar Raymond, lay in the well-known passage in the Babylonian Talmud that discusses the sin that brought about the destruction of the Second Temple. This discussion proceeded from the rabbinic sense of the disparity between the generations that preceded the destruction of the First Temple and those that preceded the destruction of the Second Temple.<sup>[68]</sup> Whereas the former were viewed as guilty of major sins, expressed traditionally as the sins of idolatry, fornication, and murder, the general concern of the latter for the careful fulfillment of Jewish law presented a significant problem. The rabbinic answer was to highlight the shortcoming of *sin'at hinam*<sup>[69]</sup>, pointless hatred. This well-known rabbinic view is turned by Friar Raymond into rabbinic acknowledgment of guilt for the pointless rejection of the Messiah sent by God to save Israel.<sup>[69]</sup> This is the heart of his case against the Jews and for the eternal rejection of the Jewish people. He does add further texts and does elaborate related sins, including the acceptance of false messiahs and the absurd expectation of a future Messiah. His case, however, rests with the rabbinic concern over the sin that brought in its wake the destruction of the Second Temple and the exile of a seemingly punctilious group of Jews, and with the rabbinic suggestion of pointless hatred as the explanation for these disasters, this pointless hatred being explained in terms of rejection of the promised Messiah. This is not the most impressive of Friar Raymond's arguments; there is a sketchiness and arbitrariness that is generally not characteristic of the work. Nonetheless, it does show us the basic system at work once again. Friar

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Raymond insists on developing his argumentation as explicitly as possible. In making his case for the abandonment of the Jewish people by their God, he continues to utilize the rabbinic sources on which his entire prior case had been constructed.

Before concluding our discussion of the *Pugio Fidei*, one further point must be made. I suggested earlier that the arguments leveled by Rabbi Moses ben Nahman were quite effective and were pondered seriously by Friar Raymond as part of his effort to refine the innovative argumentation of Friar Paul Christian. Let us look back fleetingly at our discussion of the *Pugio Fidei* to test this suggestion. Rabbi Moses's first line of defense had been intense battling over the meaning of each text adduced by Friar Paul. Clearly, Friar Raymond was aware of this possibility and attempted to forestall such Jewish argumentation through his careful citation and translation of texts, with evidence for the propriety of his translation regularly provided. Rabbi Moses's next ploy was to argue for the implausibility of Jewish perception of Christian truth combined with tenacious maintenance of adherence to Judaism. Friar Raymond, like his predecessor, has no telling response to this Jewish claim, but surely his insistence on the depravity of the Jews is related to this issue. The Jews are portrayed negatively throughout the work, in part in an effort to explain the anomaly of rabbinic insight into Christian truth and ongoing Jewish rejection of the truth. To be sure, this is a tack likely to have little positive impact on a Jewish audience.

The next two lines of Nahmanidean argumentation are similarly reflected in the *Pugio Fidei*. Rabbi Moses had struck harshly and effectively at Friar Paul's tactic of deliberate abstraction, insisting at every turn on introducing the historical figure of Jesus and showing how the Messiah of the rabbinic texts could not be identical to the Christian Messiah. Friar Raymond was acutely sensitive to the weakness of Friar Paul's position and the strength of Rabbi Moses's rebuttal. He in fact dismisses out of hand rabbinic statements advanced earlier by Friar Paul, adducing in their place only texts that harbored no obvious inconsistencies between the Messiah depicted therein and the Christian claimant. Every one of the rabbinic statements advanced by Friar Raymond speaks of a messianic figure that is chronologically consistent with the historical Jesus. Finally, the Nahmanidean ploy of rejecting aggadic literature in general is obviated by recourse to the full range of rabbinic texts, including halachic texts as well. The sim-

ple repudiation suggested by Nahmanides—for his Christian listeners, at least—is blunted by utilization of this wide range of rabbinic citations from the realm of halachah as well as the realm of aggadah.

Finally, one last item in Nahmanides' arsenal should be mentioned. Obliquely at most in the public proceedings and quite openly in his Hebrew report on the confrontation, Nahmanides, as part of his case, pointed to the personal shortcomings of his Dominican opponent. There are a number of slurs on Friar Paul's general lack of intelligence and, more specifically, his limited knowledge of rabbinic literature—"you fail to understand law and *halachah*, [comprehending] only a bit of the *aggadah* with which you have become familiar."<sup>[20]</sup> This criticism was probably quite accurate for Friar Paul. There is no real evidence for wide-ranging familiarity with rabbinic texts. Not so with Friar Raymond. The extensive efforts to collect Jewish sources obviated this line of Nahmanidean response as well. Rabbi Moses would not have been pleased at the notion that his telling arguments had paved the way for a careful refinement of the new missionizing thrusts, but that was in fact one of the results of his efforts.

The claims for Christian truth and Jewish error and hopelessness drawn up by Friar Raymond Martin—all on the basis of a reading of Jewish sources—constitute the fullest missionizing case ever developed in medieval Christendom for use among the Jews. It involved the most serious effort to penetrate Jewish thinking, the most extensive amassing of Jewish texts, the fullest range of theological and practical issues ever addressed, and the most careful utilization of Jewish data ever undertaken by Christian missionizers. The *Pugio Fidei* represents the high-water mark not only of the mid-thirteenth-century missionizing effort but, in many ways, of medieval Christian proselytizing argumentation against the Jews altogether.

To say all this is not, of course, to indicate that this argumentation had to be successful. After all, as Nahmanides had argued, Jews had read the same texts for many centuries without reaching Christological conclusions. The fullness and sophistication of the case laid out by Friar Raymond Martin was no guarantee of its effectiveness. What it did mean was that Jews exposed to this new argumentation were challenged as never before to adumbrate for themselves increasingly sophisticated counterargumentation. It is to the reflections of this Jewish response that we now proceed.

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### **Rabbi Solomon ibn Adret and His Responses to the *Pugio Fidei***

There is an obvious asymmetry in our discussion of the Jewish responses to the *Pugio Fidei*. With regard to the exchange between Friar Paul Christian and his Jewish contemporaries, we are poorly informed about the views of the former—since we do not possess anything directly from his pen—and rather well informed about the position of the latter. For the next stage in the new missionizing argumentation, the situation is reversed. On the Christian side, Friar Raymond Martin has left us the voluminous *Pugio Fidei*; we have nothing comparable for the Jewish response.

We have already explained this asymmetry on the Christian side by noting that Friar Paul was seemingly only a moderately learned former Jew whose contribution to the new argumentation

was its initiation, not its refinement; Friar Raymond was the professional missionizer who brought the new approach to its fullest development. On the Jewish side, the disparity is more complex. In part, it flows from the nature of the changes introduced in the new missionizing argumentation by Friar Raymond. In the face of the challenge mounted by Friar Paul, Rabbi Moses ben Nahman and Rabbi Mordechai ben Joseph effectively set the course for Jewish responses to the innovative claims. To be sure, Friar Raymond improved the argumentation substantially. This refinement, however, necessitated no major realignment of Jewish responses. New texts had to be dealt with, but no new tactics had to be created. The disparity flows also from the external circumstances forced on the Jews by the Dominican instigators of the new missionizing thrusts. Friar Paul's efforts had culminated in the public disputation at Barcelona, out of which had emerged the counterargumentation of Rabbi Moses and the formulation of this counterargumentation in his path-breaking and widely diffused report on

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the confrontation. Friar Raymond, while he did apparently discuss these issues publicly, engineered no such precedent-setting public spectacle. In his case, the new argumentation no longer required public testing; his enterprise was, after all, based on the positive and negative results of the Barcelona disputation. The lack of dramatic confrontation means, for us, the lack also of dramatic records of Jewish response, thereby depriving us of some of the fullness of the information available for the first stage in Jewish response to the new missionizing argumentation.

Our best—indeed, our only—evidence for Jewish awareness of and response to the refined argumentation of Friar Raymond Martin is found in the writings of his contemporary, the distinguished rabbi of Barcelona, Rabbi Solomon ibn Adret. It must be emphasized at the outset that nowhere in the writings of this major Jewish scholar and communal leader do we encounter a well-organized, full-scale rebuttal of the extensive case made by Friar Raymond. What we do find are hints of the new missionizing tactics and projected Jewish responses. The fragmentary nature of the evidence makes this part of our analysis necessarily less satisfying than the study of Friar Raymond's magnum opus. Nonetheless we shall use the writings of Rabbi Solomon to track Jewish awareness of the more sophisticated Christian case and to discern some of the lines of Jewish response.

Rabbi Solomon ibn Adret (often designated by his acronym as the Rashba), like Rabbi Moses ben Nahman, was a man of distinguished deed and reputation in mid-thirteenth-century Iberian Jewry and a figure of consequence in subsequent Jewish intellectual history.<sup>[1]</sup> He was born in the early 1230s, scion of an aristocratic and learned Jewish family of Barcelona. By the 1260s, he was already a respected political and intellectual leader in his native community. To be sure, he deferred to—or perhaps was passed up in favor of—his older colleague, Rabbi Moses, in 1263. But this implies no serious reservations about his leadership capacity or intellectual ability. For the rest of his life, Rabbi Solomon served the Jewish community of Barcelona, teaching, affording religious guidance, bearing the burden of communal affairs. While his intellectual legacy resides primarily in his rabbinic writings, which have been highly prized by subsequent generations of Jewish scholars, he was no stranger to the broader currents circulating in his community during his lifetime. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, when Rabbi Solomon was already in his seventies, he was a major figure in the resurgence of concern with the

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writings of Maimonides. Interestingly, he steered a course, at that juncture, much like that first proposed by Nahmanides back in the 1230s, a course of essentially traditionalist moderation.<sup>[2]</sup> Given the stature of Rabbi Solomon, his involvement in so many facets of the life of his generation, and the centrality of the community he led, it is not surprising to find him both aware of and concerned with the new missionizing.

The issue of contact between Friar Raymond Martin and his contemporary, Rabbi Solomon of Barcelona, has been raised anew by Jeremy Cohen, who has drawn attention to an interesting passage in Raymond Lull's *Liber de acquisitione Terrae Sanctae*. This passage speaks of a preacher who knew Arabic and had attempted unsuccessfully to convert the King of Tunis. Subsequently, according to Lull, this same preacher learned Hebrew and disputed frequently with a distinguished rabbi in Barcelona.<sup>[3]</sup> Cohen's careful analysis of the passage suggests that the Christian preacher was Friar Raymond Martin and that the rabbi in question was Rabbi Solomon ibn Adret. Noting the parallels between the arguments in the *Pugio Fidei* and in ibn Adret's *Perushei Aggadot*, Cohen asserts convincingly that there was indeed contact between these two important figures, including face-to-face discussion of the new missionizing argumentation.<sup>[4]</sup> For our purposes, this would indicate Rabbi Solomon's firsthand awareness of some of the lines of argumentation developed in the *Pugio Fidei* and his active effort to respond to these claims.

Having said this, we must, at the same time, refrain from seeking one-to-one correspondences between the Christian arguments presented in the *Pugio Fidei* and reflected in the writings of the Rashba. In the earlier discussion of the *Pugio Fidei*, I have already suggested that the compendium was quite clearly not meant for a Jewish reading audience. Intended for a leadership of missionizing preachers, it was unlikely to have been seen directly by Rabbi Solomon. Rabbi Solomon's awareness of its arguments would only have come from the kind of face-to-face encounter depicted by Raymond Lull or by reports reaching him of the new missionizing claims. Thus, a number of caveats with regard to the argumentation in the *Pugio Fidei* and its relationship to that reflected in the writings of Rabbi Solomon are suggested. (1) There is no guarantee that only the arguments of Friar Raymond will be reflected in the work of Rabbi Solomon. Other thrusts current in proselytizing circles may make their appearance as well. (2) There can likewise be no assurance of faithful Jewish perception of the

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claims made by Friar Raymond. Face-to-face encounters—and secondhand reports of such encounters—can involve substantial distortion. (3) We cannot be certain that, even when the argumentation is that of Friar Raymond and even when the reportage is accurate, the claims are those of the *Pugio Fidei*. There is no reason that the Rashba may not have included in his writings materials that reflect a prepublication or a postpublication stage of the *Pugio*. Having said all this, it is nonetheless clear that the most interesting Christian argumentation depicted by the rabbi of Barcelona is broadly that which we have already discussed in chapter 7.

Among the writings of Rabbi Solomon ibn Adret, the major source for the new Christian missionizing and lines of Jewish response is his *Perushei Aggadot*, a literary dialogue in which the Christian arguments are presented and rebutted.<sup>[5]</sup> This work again represents only piecemeal response to the new missionizing and lacks entirely the grand design of the *Pugio Fidei*. It begins with an unusual introductory statement, which reveals something of the general spiritual environment of the mid-thirteenth century, of Rabbi Solomon's perceptions of the essential issues at stake, and of his sense of the new Christian thrusts. It is significant that Rabbi Solomon defines his task in the following terms:

I have set myself to gather into a composition a few items in order to strengthen the hand of our associates [the Jews] and so that they understand the meaning of those things that are expressed in some of the *aggadot* that are found in our Talmud and in the *midrashim* in our possession.<sup>[6]</sup>

The impact of the new missionizing argumentation on this statement of intent is obvious. Jewish polemicists of previous generations never defined their objectives in these terms. Rabbi Solomon is keenly aware of the new use of rabbinic material and committed to combating Christological readings of rabbinic texts.

Rabbi Solomon makes some interesting general observations on religious faith.

At the outset let me append an introduction, regarding understanding of the truth in its fullness. Peoples and cultures are divided into two groups with regard to religious faith.

One of these groups denies all scriptures. This is the group that includes some of those who philosophize, who announce with their nugatory views that there is nothing that stands beyond human inquiry. They

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add to this that they believe that anything which human inquiry cannot fathom cannot exist. Therefore they deny that part of religion that has been transmitted to mankind through the prophets, which they [the prophets] received from the mouth of the Lord, may he be blessed, so that they might command all of mankind or one of the nations. They [the philosophers] deny all the signs and wonders that are written down in the books of religious faith, all that are considered to be in opposition to nature. These people have no religious faith, only customs which men have instituted for societal purposes and to smooth the patterns of human behavior one with another. With this group we have no dialogue regarding exegesis of the Scriptures and their meaning. . . .

The second group all acknowledge religious faith as given from the mouth of the Lord, may he be blessed, through his prophet. This group includes the three peoples known to us, i.e., the Jews, the Muslims, and the Christians, and perhaps more. Indeed these three acknowledge the religious faith of Moses our teacher, may he rest in peace, and all acknowledge that Moses represents the truth and his Torah is truth. None of them will deny this. However, one people among them divides the commandments into three categories. One category they establish as potential parables and metaphors, as in the case of the prohibition of plowing with an ox and an ass and the prohibition of eating animals which do not chew their cud and some similar commandments of the Torah. They remove them [these commandments] from their simple sense and clothe them with distorted allegorical meanings. The second category [of commandments] they preserve in their simple sense, but they set for them a prescribed time period, as in the case of the sacrifices and other similar commandments of the Torah. They announce with regard to these [commandments] that they are external forms intended to hint at the future. Thus, when the proper time arrives, the hinted-at truth is revealed and the allegorical form is annulled. This category differs from the first category in that this category was carried out literally for a time. The third category they leave without a fixed time but nonetheless introduce change, such as the sabbath, circumcision, priestly garb, and so forth. Another group takes all [the commandments] literally but establishes a set time, which involves the will of the Creator, may he be blessed—when he wishes to alter religious faith completely or in part through a prophet.

We the congregation of Israel take all the commandments in their literal sense, not as an allegory or a puzzle or for a limited time. Rather the commandments in their totality are eternal, as the days of the heavens above the earth, except for those which were commanded for a given time or for a given place or for a given circumstance.<sup>[2]</sup>

I have quoted this passage at some length because it is useful from a number of perspectives. First, it places Rabbi Solomon very much in the mid-thirteenth century. His concern to define categories and sub-

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categories of faith and to indicate the grounds of argumentation that might be utilized with the various groups is reminiscent of many other thinkers of the period. Second, it shows familiarity with some of the views of the commandments expressed in Friar Raymond's *Pugio Fidei*. To be sure, there is not a perfect correspondence between the friar's five categories of law and the rabbi's three, but there is considerable overlap. Since it is likely that the Rashba never saw the *Pugio Fidei* but rather heard the views expressed therein from Friar Raymond or others, the lack of accurate correspondence should not be a surprise. Finally, and most important, Rabbi Solomon's statement represents an independent and proactive Jewish stance, rather than a reactive one. Whereas Rabbi Moses ben Nahman was, as we have seen, responding to an agenda that was

structured by the Christian side, an agenda that stressed the issue of the Messiah, Rabbi Solomon's freestanding statement, like that of Rabbi Mordechai, gives us a far more accurate view of internal Jewish thinking. It is of great significance that Rabbi Solomon chooses to establish his categories on the basis of religious law. From the Jewish perspective, this issue—rather than the issue of the Messiah—occupied center stage in religious thinking and religious debate. Having said this, it should be recalled that both Friar Paul and Friar Raymond were quite sensitive to the centrality of religious law in Jewish thinking. While each began his case with the issue of the Messiah, they both understood that the matter of Jewish law had to be addressed. Friar Paul intended to treat this issue at Barcelona; he failed to do so there but clearly did deal with it in his subsequent preaching. Friar Raymond, as we have seen, accorded serious consideration to this matter in his treatise. It is useful to have this independent source show us how deeply the Jews themselves perceived the heart of the struggle as the issue of religious law.

Despite Rabbi Solomon's sense of the centrality of Jewish law in Christian-Jewish debate, let us begin our considerations with the issue that had been accorded preeminence by the Christian side both at Barcelona and in the *Pugio Fidei*, namely, the advent of the Messiah. Discussion of this issue is found both in the *Perushei Aggadot* of the Rashba and in an interesting responsum that he wrote. The latter of these two sources, addressed to the Jewish community of Lerida, seems to reflect actual face-to-face confrontations both in the community of Lerida and in the Rashba's home community of Barcelona.

[This responsum is intended] to teach the Jews to respond to others truthfully and properly. It has seemed proper to me to set before you [these

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matters] in writing. For a respected figure who has visited you recently told me that one of the sages of the gentiles spoke within [your] community on a day of assembly and filled [your] ears with his words. You asked that I provide you a response to his words. Therefore I have seen fit to write down that which one of their sages disputed with me with regard to these same issues and indeed [with regard to] more than you heard. . . . I shall set down for you briefly the essence of what our opponent said and the essence of [my] reply.<sup>[8]</sup>

Let us attend briefly to the opening section of this exchange. Not surprisingly, it revolves about Genesis 49:10, which played such a central role in Barcelona and in the *Pugio Fidei*. The opening statement attributed to the Christian preacher is a simple one, arguing merely that the verse indicates that "the scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes." The term *Shiloh*, he continues, means Messiah, as indicated in the Targum. Since the staff has already departed, then the obvious inference must be that the Messiah has already come. This is clearly reminiscent of Friar Paul's opening ploy, with the additional reference to the Targum, which reminds us of the general procedure of Friar Raymond in the *Pugio Fidei*.

The Rashba's response is somewhat surprising. He breaks with the general pattern of explication of this key verse that we have encountered thus far and suggests that "the word '*ad*' does not indicate subsequent suspension of the [original] phenomenon. Rather sometimes it offers assurance of the eventuation of the [original] phenomenon and—all the more so—further continuation."<sup>[9]</sup> This is an unusual proposal. Rabbi Solomon claims that the verse should not be read as though it predicts suspension of Jewish rule with the coming of the Messiah but rather that it promises continuation of such rule to the time of the Messiah and yet more certain prolongation of that rule after his advent. If this exegesis is accepted, then the current suspension of Jewish rule, whatever its significance might be, cannot imply that the Messiah has already come.

The next step in the rabbi's report is not clear. He has his adversary simply repeat the preceding Christian claim. One can only suggest some textual problem at this point or—more likely—a disjuncture in the text, with the rabbi describing a second encounter. Whatever the explanation of this strange Christian rejoinder, Rabbi Solomon responds to it in the same terms we have already encountered in Nahmanides, arguing that if suspension of Jewish rule indicates the

advent of the Messiah, then that advent must have taken place at the time of Babylonian exile, many centuries before Jesus. In reply, the Christian argues that "during that exile it [the scepter] did not depart, for there were courts that judged even capital cases." Again, there is here a hint of the more refined argumentation of Friar Raymond, although without the rigor we have encountered in the *Pugio Fidei*. Rabbi Solomon rejects this suggestion on two grounds. (1) "First because they did not judge capital cases in Babylonia. [Indeed they did] not [judge capital cases] even in Jerusalem forty years prior to the destruction [of the Second Temple]."<sup>[10]</sup> The point is clear, although gratuitous introduction of the issue of capital cases in general is difficult to understand in the light of Friar Raymond's use of this material. (2) "Moreover Jacob said this to Judah, but the courts were not [made up] of Judah—rather they were gathered from all of Israel."<sup>[11]</sup> Thus, on both grounds, the Christian suggestion that the scepter was continued through the court system fails, according to the rabbi. At this point, the rabbi has his adversary ask him, "If this is the case, then in your view what is to be done with the prophecy of Jacob?" The Rashba's response is to present once more the exegesis we have noted above.

A few final observations on this material are in order. First, the passage is not very well organized into a coherent whole. Second, there are obvious reflections of the refined approach of Friar Raymond Martin, but there is hardly full awareness of the argumentation embodied in the *Pugio*. This may reflect either a failure to perceive fully the claims of the alleged Christian preacher or a stage in the development of this refined argumentation which preceded the *Pugio*. I see no way of deciding between these alternatives. Finally, one does not have the sense of a well-developed response on the part of the rabbi. His answers are to the point, but they do not constitute a full-blown response to the sophisticated argumentation of the *Pugio*.

A passage in the *Perushei Aggadot* deals with the same issues but seems to reflect a later stage in the development of the argumentation. In this text, the rabbi has his adversary, who may be fictional, suggest the following:

He [Jacob] said: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes." This means the Messiah, as you yourselves say and as the Targum explained: "[until] the Messiah comes." Behold you have not had governing authority nor royal power for many years, from the days of the destruction of the Second Temple.

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Indeed you have exercised no authority from then till now. Moreover, forty years prior to the destruction, the Sanhedrin was exiled from its place, as is indicated in the Talmud which you possess. This was a result of the sin which you sinned at that time, for it took place forty years prior to the destruction.<sup>[12]</sup>

This is much closer to the formulation of the case presented in the *Pugio*, although even here the precision of Friar Raymond's argument is lacking.

Rabbi Solomon's response in the *Perushei Aggadot* moves along the same lines that we have already encountered in the second exchange in his responsum, arguing for a much earlier suspension of Jewish political authority subsequent to the exile into Babylonia. The point, while well taken, is highly traditional; it leads to a further set of thrusts and counterthrusts, broken off with the abrupt end of the text as we have it.<sup>[13]</sup>

All told, the sections of Rabbi Solomon's writings that deal with the advent of the Messiah on the basis of Genesis 49:10 show some awareness of the newer argumentation of Friar Raymond, although not a full sense of this argumentation. The lines of response presented by Rabbi Solomon vary from the rather standard to the somewhat unusual, although, in general, the responses to this Christian thrust are not fully developed. It must be remembered, of course, that for Rabbi Solomon, this issue was not the decisive one. For him, religious law, that is, Jewish law in particular, was paramount.

The issue of Jewish law is raised by Rabbi Solomon a number of times and in a number of ways. Again, since the *Perushei Aggadot* cannot be taken as a direct response to the *Pugio Fidei*, but rather as a reaction to ideas in the air in Barcelona, the variety of Christian views should not be disconcerting. Let us examine some of the Christian claims advanced and the Jewish responses suggested by Rabbi Solomon.

The simplest Christian thrust has the Christian adversary in the dialogue asking in a most general way, "Of what concern is it to the Holy One, blessed be he, that we eat the [flesh of the] lamb and not eat the [flesh of the] pig or that we wear wool and linen separately but prohibit them together."<sup>[14]</sup> Rabbi Solomon gives an equally general answer: "It is sufficient for us that he, may he be blessed, so commanded and that we have done his will, even though our intelligence does not comprehend his wisdom."<sup>[15]</sup> Both the thrust and the parry are highly traditional and of little real interest.

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While the Christian thrust is a simplistic one, the issue is clearly of such significance to the Rashba that he pursues a number of further rationales for the ritual laws. Three of these flow from important biblical verses. Let us note only the first.

Indeed [God], may his name be blessed, has already written in his unassailable Torah that these laws which he ordained for us are considered by those who acknowledge the truth as wisdom and discernment, for it is written: "Observe them [the laws and rules transmitted by Moses] faithfully, for that will be proof of your wisdom and discernment to other peoples, who on hearing of all these laws will say, 'Surely, that great nation is a wise and discerning people.' "<sup>[16]</sup> Thus he said that by virtue of observance of the laws we are worthy of being designated wise and discerning. Indeed he went farther and said *rak* [translated above as "surely" but taken by Rabbi Solomon in a more basic sense as "only"] a wise and discerning people, to indicate that they will say that only we alone are a wise and discerning people among the nations. This [will be so concluded] through analogic reasoning. For all the commandments of the Torah whose basis we understand are truly built on truth, purity, righteousness, respect for forebears, avoidance of illicit gain, acknowledgment of God, may he be blessed, and such like. Likewise when we do what the nations cannot understand through intelligence, by analogy we shall be judged as showing unusual discernment. They [the nations] will say: "Any people whose deeds are upright and pure with all that we see of them and all that our intelligence grasps of their deeds, then in truth whatever they do must be of necessity and not frivolous. Thus, even though we do not grasp through our intelligence some of their deeds, such as the rejection of forbidden foods and of the donning of wool and linen jointly, this does not reflect the inadequacy of their knowledge, but rather the inadequacy of our intelligence and the superiority of their wisdom and discernment."<sup>[17]</sup>

This is a rationale for Jewish law that derives from a combination of biblical verse and reasonable argument for the superiority of Jewish law. As noted so many times during our discussion of the traditional polemical argumentation, these claims are unlikely to have been meaningful outside the Jewish community. It is clear, however, that Rabbi Solomon was addressing himself exclusively to a Jewish audience under pressure and would have been quite satisfied to have successfully reassured that audience only.

There is one final argument that departs from scriptural foundations and that involves instead an appeal to philosophy and the philosophers. The Rashba suggests quickly and without great elaboration that he was aware of "philosophers who said that the prophetic soul was above the philosophic soul."<sup>[18]</sup> Although this brief claim cites

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both Plato and Aristotle, the impression is that this was merely window dressing and not an integral part of Rabbi Solomon's multifaceted response to the new missionizing argumentation.

The second Christian thrust depicted by Rabbi Solomon is sharper. The Christian disputant is made to acknowledge that, for a period of time, all the commandments were observed—and were meant to be observed—in literal fashion.

Indeed, however, the commandments are divided into three categories—part having to do with sanctity, part having to do with civil affairs, and part having to do with habituation and education, as in the case of an untrained calf or a donkey unhabituated to carrying a load. One puts upon such an animal a heavy load so that he not learn improper ways until he is trained. Subsequently one lightens the heavy load and gives him an appropriate load. Likewise when the Torah was given to you, you were new and preceded all nations with regard to the commandments. In order to habituate you, [God] heaped upon you commandments such as eating the [flesh of the] pig and the prohibition of forbidden conjunctions and such commandments. After habituation, these commandments were annulled and there remained only the first two categories.<sup>[19]</sup>

While the notion of a number of categories of Jewish law, some temporal and some eternal, is reminiscent of Friar Raymond, the specifics are not.<sup>[20]</sup> Rabbi Solomon's responses are traditional. He argues first that the chronology in this portrait makes no sense. If habituation were the goal of the ritual commandments, then annulment of these commandments need not have waited until the time of Jesus. The process of habituation was complete at a far earlier stage, and thus, according to this Christian view, the annulment should have taken place far earlier as well. Second, he cites Isaiah 66 as a statement on future redemption and indicates that the ritual commandments are there projected for the time of redemption. Finally, Rabbi Solomon negates, in a sense, the system of distinctions altogether, indicating that in the major biblical passages that speak of ritual abstention from certain foods, the explicit scriptural rationale for such abstention is sanctity and not societal habituation. This is interesting give-and-take but still reflects little of the new missionizing.

With the third line of Christian attack, we find ourselves more firmly in the mid-thirteenth-century ambience.

Some of the commandments they explain literally, but they claim that they are not of intrinsic significance and are only forms intended to hint at future events. When the future event is realized, the commandments

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which prefigured it are annulled. One of the commandments which they include in this category is the commandment of the paschal sacrifice, which is a memento intended to hint at what they claim later took place. Some of them bring proof from what is said in Tractate Kiddushin, in the chapter Ha-Ish Mekadesh: "And all the aggregate community of the Israelites shall slaughter it."<sup>[21]</sup> This teaches that all Israel fulfills the obligation with one paschal offering.<sup>[22]</sup> With what paschal offering will all Israel fulfill its obligation? Surely that special paschal offering.<sup>[23]</sup>

Here we have echoes of Friar Raymond's approach. The statement noted by Rabbi Solomon corresponds to Friar Raymond's fifth category of Jewish law, which he calls the sacraments. Moreover, the support for this Christian claim is rooted in a talmudic citation, again reminiscent of Friar Raymond. Indeed, as our analysis of the *Pugio Fidei* has shown, this second stage in the exploitation of Jewish sources did not restrict itself to aggadic materials only. Here the Christian protagonist cites a distinctly legal passage. Although we do not find this particular passage in the *Pugio Fidei*, this third Christian assault on Jewish ritual nevertheless quite clearly reflects Friar Raymond and the new mid-thirteenth-century missionizing in both its content and its style.

The serious use of rabbinic materials elicits a sober response from Rabbi Solomon ibn Adret. He addresses in halachic terms the citation adduced in the Christian argument.

This claim is vain. For [with regard to the verse] "and all the aggregate community of Israelites shall slaughter it"—there derives therefrom either a positive commandment that all Jews slaughter on the Passover the lamb in order to eat it roasted or the granting of permission to free all Israel from the obligation. Therefore it involves either a positive commandment or the granting of permission, and thus [the proposed Christian explanation] is groundless. He who said this [the quoted rabbinic statement] did so only to indicate that, although one lamb does not have enough [flesh] with which to provide the required amount of meat, nonetheless they have fulfilled their obligation, for [this is according to] Rabbi Nathan who believed that eating [the meat of the Paschal lamb] is not the essential issue, but rather that the sprinkling of the blood is crucial.<sup>[24]</sup>

What Rabbi Solomon had done here is to challenge the exegesis of the rabbinic passage, arguing that it cannot be understood in the manner proposed by the Christian protagonist. Its meaning must instead be seen within the context of the precise legal issue under discussion. In this regard, Rabbi Solomon is following one of the main lines of argu-

mentation sketched out by his predecessor, Rabbi Moses ben Nahman, who also argued relentlessly for contextual understanding of statements adduced in support of Christian claims.

To this specific response to the rabbinic statement utilized by the Christian protagonist in his dialogue, Rabbi Solomon adds a more general observation of significance.

In truth there is no commandment in the Torah that has been annulled or that will ever be annulled, with the exception of temporal commandments such as the [temporary prohibition during the wilderness period] of meat slaughtered for satisfying human appetite [as opposed to meat slaughtered for ritual purposes].<sup>[25]</sup> Even though there are commandments that are not now operative, such as the commandments related to the Land of Israel, e.g., [Temple] gifts and tithes and all the Temple ritual, not one of these has been annulled; rather they are deferred because they cannot be observed with the place and the opportunities required for them. If these things were available today, then these commandments would be in force. This is obvious.<sup>[26]</sup>

Rabbi Solomon buttresses his case by examining a series of major ritual commandments, for which he claims scriptural support for eternal applicability. Among those he cites are the commandments of the paschal lamb and of the eating of *mazot*<sup>[27]</sup>. The basis for the rabbi's assertion of the everlasting nature of these obligations lies in the biblical statement that defines them as "everlasting law" (*hukat*<sup>[28]</sup> *'olam*), an understanding of *'olam* that Friar Paul had gone to great lengths to reject. To be sure, the rabbi's case derives from more than the disputed meaning of *'olam*; he uses other key biblical phrases such as "for all your generations" and "as the days of the heavens above the earth." The sum total of the argument is that a series of biblical expressions indicate beyond any reasonable doubt that major items of ritual law were intended by the divine author of the law to be unchanging. The Rashba continues to press the argument, claiming that even when the temporal implications of a given law are not mentioned specifically, the Bible clearly intends such laws to be everlasting. The only exceptions—and they are limited ones—are those laws which are specifically designated for a given time only. All others, he claims, were intended to be valid for all times.<sup>[29]</sup>

Rabbi Solomon presses his case by appeal to prophetic texts as well, citing, in particular, Isaiah and Malachi. What he argues here is that the vision of the postmessianic future projected by these divinely inspired visionaries includes the continued fulfillment of the ritual

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laws. Thus, even in the new era inaugurated by the appearance of the Messiah and despite all the changes associated with this new era, the ritual law will remain an unchanged feature of the life of the people of Israel. Reference to these prophecies has double meaning. First, this is still another reasonable argument for Rabbi Solomon's position. Second, he was undoubtedly aware that the Christian case posited by Friar Paul and Friar Raymond was based on the notion of the altered status of Jewish law in the wake of the advent of Jesus whom they saw as the prophetically predicted Messiah.<sup>[28]</sup>

Rabbi Solomon completes this extensive and vigorous case by arguing the overarching point, claiming—as he had already done in his introductory remarks—that in fact observance of the law formed the very heart of the Jewish religious faith. The passage bears at least partial citation. You must further see that Moses our teacher, of blessed memory, was a prophet of the commandments, not a prophet of future events. Only at the end of the Torah did he prophesy concerning future eventuations, as a way of issuing a general warning concerning all the commandments of the Torah. He informed them [the Israelites] of what would happen to them if they would not fulfill the words of the Torah, as is said: "And later generations will ask—the children who succeed you, and foreigners who come from distant lands [and see the plagues and diseases that the Lord has inflicted upon that land . . .—all nations] will ask, 'Why did the Lord do thus to this land? [Wherefore that awful wrath?] They will be told, 'Because they forsook the covenant that the Lord, the God of their fathers, made with them when he freed them from the land of Egypt.'"<sup>[29]</sup> Behold he [Moses] gave testimony here that this punishment will only be realized because of the abandonment of the

covenant which he [God] struck with us at Horeb with regard to the entire body of the commandments—not because of our general behavior or for taking a new faith for which we were not commanded at Horeb.<sup>[20]</sup>

This is a powerful conclusion to a lengthy and important argument, one that clearly meant a great deal to its author.

The fourth set of Christian claims cited by Rabbi Solomon is by far the most interesting and shows the greatest sophistication in the utilization of rabbinic materials. We shall have to quote this passage at some length and in some technical detail.

He came against us utilizing the *aggadot* that are found in the Talmud, claiming that in the Talmud they said that the commandments were destined to be annulled. For they said in the first chapter of Tractate

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Berakhot: "It is taught: Ben Zoma said to the sages, 'Is the exodus from Egypt to be mentioned at the time of the Messiah?'"<sup>[21]</sup> From the discussion it is to be inferred that the commandments of the Torah were given for a set time, since the recitation of the *shema'* and the commandment of Passover and the *mazot*<sup>[22]</sup> and the prohibition of *hamez*<sup>[23]</sup> were intended as mementos of the exodus from Egypt. For it is written: "You shall slaughter the Passover sacrifice for the Lord your God, [from the flock and the herd, in the place where the Lord will choose to establish his name.] You shall not eat anything leavened with it; for seven days thereafter you shall eat unleavened bread, bread of distress [—for you departed from the land of Egypt hurriedly—] so that you may remember the day of your departure from the land of Egypt."<sup>[24]</sup> Thus [God] commanded concerning the eating of the paschal lamb, the *mazah*, and the prohibition of *hamez* for seven days, so that we are reminded thereby of the exodus from Egypt. Now, if the exodus from Egypt is not to be mentioned in messianic times, as in the view of the sages, then likewise the paschal lamb, the *mazah*<sup>[25]</sup>, and the prohibition of *hamez* are annulled, since we have been commanded these things only to recall the exodus from Egypt.<sup>[26]</sup>

This is highly sophisticated use of Jewish legal sources, more adroit than that reflected in the *Mahazik Emunah* and very much along the lines we have seen in the *Pugio Fidei*. Rabbi Solomon has his adversary cite two further highly technical sources to make the same point. While I shall refrain from quoting these lengthy and technical passages, what must be emphasized is the excellent command of difficult halachic material reflected in all three of these Christian thrusts. Clearly, this second stage in the development of the new-style Christian argumentation, a stage that proceeded far beyond the rudimentary efforts of Friar Paul Christian, was encountered by Rabbi Solomon of Barcelona. The refined Christian claims of the *Pugio Fidei* were carried from the circle of Friar Raymond Martin and into the Jewish communities, where they came to the attention of Rabbi Solomon.

The technical thrust of the Christian claims evoked from Rabbi Solomon a series of equally technical rejoinders. Again, I shall deal only with the first of the series, but I shall have to do so in some detail. What Rabbi Solomon challenges is the nexus created by the Christian claimant between recollection of the exodus and the key commandments of the paschal lamb, the *mazah*<sup>[27]</sup>, and the prohibition of *hamez*<sup>[28]</sup>.

The commandment of the paschal lamb, of *mazah*, and of prohibition of *hamez* does not require recollection of the exodus from Egypt. This will become apparent from the diversity of punishments which [God], may he

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be blessed, decreed. With regard to nonfulfillment of the paschal offering, [he decreed] divine punishment through sudden or premature death. . . . He decreed the same with regard to eating of *hamez*<sup>[29]</sup> . . . . But with regard to eating of the *mazah*<sup>[30]</sup>, he decreed a positive commandment [punishment for which is milder]. . . . Now, if the bases in all these cases were the same, why did he decree in two instances divine punishment through sudden or premature death and in the third only a positive commandment?<sup>[31]</sup>

The diverse punishments are thus taken as a reflection of differing foundations for the three commandments. They could not all be taken together as a vehicle for the recollection of the exodus from Egypt. This response, however, is not decisive, and Rabbi Solomon tackles the heart of the issue, the biblical verse that seems to suggest remembrance of the exodus as the basis for the

three ritual obligations of the paschal lamb, the eating of mazot<sup>[34]</sup>, and the abstention from hamez<sup>[35]</sup>. Again, the presentation is technical. Let us set the backdrop for the rabbi's case by citing the relevant biblical passage:

Observe the month of Abib and offer a passover sacrifice to the Lord your God, for it was in the month of Abib, at night, that the Lord your God freed you from Egypt. You shall slaughter the Passover sacrifice for the Lord your God, from the flock and the herd, in the place where the Lord will choose to establish his name. You shall not eat anything leavened with it; for seven days thereafter you shall eat unleavened bread, bread of distress—for you departed from the land of Egypt hurriedly—so that you may remember the day of your departure from the land of Egypt as long as you live. For seven days no leaven shall be found with you in all your territory, and none of the flesh of what you slaughter on the evening of the first day shall be left until morning.<sup>[36]</sup>

Rabbi Solomon proceeds to propose that "the verse that says 'so that you may remember the day of your departure from Egypt' does not relate [directly] to completion of the paschal offering, to abstention from hamez, or to eating of the mazah."<sup>[36]</sup> He argues that these rituals are indeed related to the recollection of the exodus from Egypt; such recollection, however, is not the defining purpose of the rituals. He claims that the word "so that" (*le-ma'an*) in this verse is parallel to the use of the same word in the verse that speaks of the sabbath as instituted "so that your ox and your ass might rest."<sup>[37]</sup> Just as the resting of oxen and asses does not define the purpose of the sabbath, so too remembrance of the exodus from Egypt does not define the purpose of the three rituals of Passover. In both cases, the term "so that" points

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to valuable results of fulfillments of the commandments, not to their inherent rationale.

This still leaves a fourth item mentioned in the Christian thrust, namely, the recitation of the shema'. Here again Rabbi Solomon argues, in effect, that the Christian case involves a misunderstanding of the ultimate purpose of the commandment. Beyond recollection of the exodus from Egypt, the regular recitation of the shema' is intended to remind the Jew of the power and wondrous deeds of the Almighty. Thus, when the Messiah comes and redeems Jews all over the world (indicating en passant that the Messiah has not yet come and has not yet redeemed them) and when a new set of recollections are instituted, the ultimate purpose of these recitations will remain intact, that is, they will continue to serve as a constant reminder of the glories of the Lord. In this sense, then, the commandment will not be abrogated: Jews will continue to celebrate the power and concern of their Creator.<sup>[38]</sup>

Thus, Rabbi Solomon ibn Adret has clearly responded to the detailed argument mounted by Friar Raymond with an equally detailed rebuttal. Specific issues of Jewish law are discussed in a highly technical fashion; the rabbi's goal was to prove that the four central obligations identified as annulled in messianic times—the paschal lamb, the eating of mazot<sup>[34]</sup>, the abstention from hamez<sup>[35]</sup>, and the recitation of the shema'—would in fact not be annulled during the days of the Messiah but would remain, along with the rest of Jewish law, in full force. What is striking here is the technical character of the Christian thrust and the equally technical character of the Jewish rejoinder.

As we have already noted, the twin negative thrusts against Jewish sensitivities involved the argument that Jewish law was no longer valid and meaningful and the claim that Jewish circumstances were now hopeless. We have seen that Rabbi Mordechai ben Joseph addressed the major part of his treatise to the latter allegation, arguing vigorously that all the promises for messianic redemption of the Jews remained in force and that the longed-for salvation would eventuate. While Rabbi Solomon reversed the priorities, arguing more strenuously the issue of Jewish law, he was not insensitive to the Christian claim of Jewish hopelessness. He has his Christian adversary make the following statement, obviously reminiscent of the *Pugio Fidei*: Our exile [the exile of the Jews] was lengthened only because they failed to believe in that which he had proven [i.e., the messianic role of Jesus, which was central to the *Pugio Fidei* specifically and the new missionizing argumentation in general] and because they hated him groundlessly.

He brought proof from what was said in the first chapter of Tractate Yoma: "Why was the First Temple destroyed? Because of idolatry, fornication, and murder. Why was the Second Temple destroyed? Because of groundless hatred. This is to teach you that groundless hatred is equal in its significance to those three iniquities."<sup>[40]</sup> Now if this was said with regard to groundless hatred between humans, is it possible to say groundless hatred between humans is as important as those three iniquities? Rather [the reference can only be] to that well-known hatred which you [the Jews] hated him whom he proved [i.e., Jesus].<sup>[40]</sup>

The correspondence between this claim depicted by Rabbi Solomon and the actual thrust of the *Pugio Fidei* on this issue is manifest.

Rabbi Solomon addressed this matter seriously and undertook a number of rebuttals. The first line of rejoinder reminds us of an earlier approach taken by Rabbi Moses ben Nahman. Rabbi Solomon proposes consideration of the identity of the author of this statement.

Who recounted this *aggadah*? A Jew or a Christian or a heretic who behaved like a Jew and believed like a Christian? Now if he was truly a Jew, then he did not make the statement in the fashion that you indicate, for then he would not have been a Jew. If he was a Christian, then I need not believe in what he said regarding this matter. Let him say whatever he wishes. If he was a heretic, then neither we nor you need believe in what he said. One does not bring proof from a heretic.<sup>[41]</sup>

The answer put in the mouth of the rabbi's adversary corresponds to the position that we hypothesized earlier.

He was truly a Jew, but he spoke without sensing [what he had said]. Just as you say, "he prophesied without realizing what he had prophesied."<sup>[42]</sup>

Rabbi Solomon's reply is twofold.

Who would force us to believe the statement of someone who does not understand what he is saying? Is it not better to say that the author of the statement understood his statement, but that it bears another explanation.<sup>[43]</sup>

The issue is serious. Again, a Jewish spokesman attacks the central thrust of the new argumentation. The Christian side now claims that rabbinic exegesis and dicta can be shown to have implied Christological meaning. To this, Jewish spokesman like Nahmanides and the Rashba reply that the notion is inherently unlikely. The wisest alternative is to seek an explanation of these statements that requires no

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such tortured suppositions. At this juncture, we are no longer in the realm of unassailable argumentation; we have moved to the domain of greater or lesser likelihoods. The Jewish spokesmen argue to their brethren that the greater likelihood is the non-Christological import of the disputed statements.

Rabbi Solomon does not limit himself to this rebuttal. He next attacks the proposed Christian understanding of the rabbinic statement, suggesting that it clearly contrasts the three sins that supposedly led to the destruction of the First Temple (idolatry, fornication, and murder) with the single sin that led to the destruction of the Second Temple (groundless hatred). However, the Christian exegesis of this passage blurs the essential contrast, according to Rabbi Solomon, and in fact presents further problems.

If it is as you say—when you said that this statement refers to that groundless hatred that you suggest—then it [this groundless hatred] includes the most heinous murder that might occur, according to your view, murder the severity of which was not encountered during the First Temple, even if they had shed the blood of the entire human race and no human remained. Likewise during the First Temple, although they worshiped idolatrously, they did not strike out as they did during the Second Temple, according to what you consider the meaning of this *aggadah*. Indeed they worshiped all the more idolatrously during the Second Temple and denied the divine in incomparable fashion. From this is manifest the lack of validity of the proposal which you made concerning this statement. The same is similarly manifest from what was said there: "to teach you that groundless hatred is equal in significance to those three iniquities." According to this view [the Christian explication of the *aggadah*], this equivalence would represent stupidity on the part of the author of the statement. Now look,

is it possible that someone intending to contrast and to magnify [would say] that a large mountain is equivalent to a small ant. Such is not the style of any person having a brain in his head.

Moreover this incompatibility is further reflected in what was objected there [in the talmudic passage]: "Now was there no groundless hatred during the First Temple? Behold it is written: 'They shall be cast before the sword together with my people.'<sup>[44]</sup> It is said there: 'These are people who eat and drink with one another but pierce one another with the swords of their tongues.' " They [the rabbis of the Talmud] respond [to the question as to the existence of groundless hatred during the First Temple]: "That refers only to the princes of the people, as is written: ['For this shall befall] all the chieftains of my people.'<sup>[45]</sup> Now if they said this with the intention that you think [as a reference to Jewish rejection of Jesus], how could they [the rabbis] object: "Was there not

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"groundless hatred during the First Temple," that is to say that during the First Temple they hated groundlessly. And how could they respond that it was so, but that the hatred existed only among the princes of Israel only. Now if the hatred that existed during the Second Temple is that hatred which you think, then it did not exist at all during the First Temple, neither among the people at large nor among the princes. Thus you must recognize and acknowledge that this statement was not made with that meaning [the Christian view], but simply indicates that they hated one another.<sup>[46]</sup>

Thus, on a series of grounds, Rabbi Solomon rejects the Christian view that we found central to the *Pugio Fidei*: it makes no sense in terms of the terminology of the statement; it is absurd in terms of the comparison of the two sets of alleged sins; it makes incomprehensible the flow of the talmudic passage. The only sensible explication of the passage is the traditional Jewish one: the sin of groundless hatred within human society is an extremely grave offense or, as Rabbi Solomon himself put it, "In truth hatred includes [potentially] all the iniquities."

This extensive rebuttal of the Christian reading of the rabbinic aggadah still leaves unanswered the question of the lengthiness of Jewish exile, and the Rashba does not leave that stone unturned.

I gave two responses on this issue. First, no one comprehends the rules of God, may he be blessed, for "his designs are [very] subtle."<sup>[47]</sup> We only know in a general way that it is not groundless, for "all his ways are just."<sup>[48]</sup> Secondly, in truth every individual sin does not entail a punishment that would add up to all this [the lengthy exile] were it added to the total. Indeed the individual person who sins alone bears responsibility, as is said: "A child shall not share the burden of the parent's guilt, nor shall a parent share the burden of a child's guilt. The person who sins, he alone shall die."<sup>[49]</sup> [In the same way] the sin of the corporate body is visited upon the corporate body. However three items that one might consider individual are in fact corporate. The first is the sin of the father of the family; the second is the sin of the king; the third is the sin committed by the majority of the people, for which are punished even individuals who did not agree with the majority. The reasons in all three cases are cited in Scriptures. . . . Thus [in sum] it is possible that our forefathers sinned and the subsequent generations were punished, until a time and period which God, may he be blessed, will favor, or that we deal here with sublime matters incomprehensible to us. Blessed be [God] who knows. The judgment is proper.<sup>[50]</sup>

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According to the Rashba, understanding the basis for the lengthy exile suffered by the Jews is no simple matter. He does attempt to reassure his Jewish listeners nonetheless that there are explanations. Whatever they might be, the Christian theses advanced by the missionizing circle of Friar Raymond are resolutely repudiated.

In conclusion, we have seen that the Jews of post-1263 Spain felt missionizing pressure but perceived the threat in a multiplicity of ways. The line from the workshop of Friar Raymond into the Jewish quarters of Spain was not straight. At the same time, there can be no doubt that one of the major thrusts—indeed, probably the major thrust—perceived by Jews like the Rashba was the new missionizing argumentation that Friar Paul had initiated and that Friar Raymond had refined. Moreover, this new argumentation was taken quite seriously. In the writings of Rabbi Solomon ibn Adret, there is none of the bantering levity that we encountered in Rabbi Moses ben Nahman. The reason is clear: Friar Raymond and his circle constituted a much more serious group of adversaries. Friar Raymond's more extensive knowledge of rabbinic literature and his better

command of that literature resulted in a more serious set of Jewish responses, including argumentation that involved significant ingenuity in the use of textual proofs. Finally, the writings of Rabbi Solomon, like the *Mahazik Emunah* of Rabbi Mordechai ben Joseph, give us a much better sense of the Jewish perceptions of strength and weakness, and such a sense is invaluable. Whereas Rabbi Moses had built his case in response to the Christian attack, Rabbi Solomon had greater latitude in his writings and left us a clearer record of his own evaluation of the relative significance of the various Christian thrusts. Rabbi Solomon is obviously not deeply concerned with the positive lines of Christian argumentation, such as the argument that the Messiah has already come. What evokes his greatest concern is the more negative lines of Christian argumentation, specifically, the assault on Jewish law and the claim of Jewish hopelessness. This leader of Spanish Jewry obviously felt his flock most vulnerable on these issues, for these are the thrusts that he goes to the greatest lengths to parry. Put in a different way, as we have already noted, the Christian missionizers—the aggressors in this circumstance—did not need to construct a foolproof case for their faith; it would have sufficed for their purposes to evoke fundamental doubt in their Jewish auditors. That alone would have constituted a major victory and would have pointed those Jews who doubted to—

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ward acceptance of the dominant Christian faith. The assault on Jewish law and the case for the hopelessness of Jewish circumstances probed weak points in Jewish sensitivity, and it is no accident that Rabbi Solomon devoted most of his efforts to reassuring his followers on these crucial issues, as had Rabbi Mordechai ben Joseph. The give-and-take was serious, and Rabbi Solomon knew precisely where to direct his Jewish counterargumentation.

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## 9— **Impact and Implications**

### **Immediate and Long-Term Impact**

The aggressive environment of the mid-thirteenth century, intensified by a measure of uncertainty and anxiety, produced a major missionizing assault on European Jewry. New and substantial resources were allocated to the proselytizing effort, the support of major secular authorities was enlisted in forcing Jewish attendance at missionizing sermons and disputations, and innovative argumentation was developed. The heart of the innovative argumentation lay in the utilization of rabbinic literature—both exegesis of the Scriptures and freestanding aggadic and halachic dicta—to confirm Christian truths or to deny and deride traditional Jewish doctrines.

Is it possible to gauge the immediate impact of the new missionizing effort? The direct answer to this question is that it is not. Sources that would allow us to do this are not available. Most significant is the lack of personal materials from the Jews of this period, for it is only such observations that would enable us to identify the motivations of Jews struggling with the issue of conversion or of Jews who had actually made the decision to convert. Even external evidence for

the ebb and flow of Jewish conversion to Christianity in the middle and late decades of the thirteenth century is lacking. Thus, a definitive assessment of the impact of the new missionizing is impossible.

A few sketchy suggestions can be made. There is no evidence to suggest the immediate efficacy of the conversionist sermons of the period from the 1240s through the 1270s. Neither the Christian nor the Jewish sources indicate tangible successes for the new missionizing effort. Only one source addresses the immediate impact of the new preaching—a Jewish account that proudly claims that despite difficult circumstances, not a single Jew responded positively to Friar Paul's proselytizing in Paris. The Jewish author claims that of the more than one thousand Jews forced to hear the missionizing sermons, "not one of us turned to the religion of vanity and lies."<sup>[1]</sup> This is an interesting

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report. On the one hand, by noting the lack of conversion so prominently, the author indicates the gravity of the situation. It was clearly not unthinkable for him that Jews might have converted. This is reflective of the seriousness of the new enterprise. On the other hand, the spirited contention that not one Jew was truly attracted to Christianity does attest that Friar Paul's preaching had no discernible impact on his Paris audience. Beyond this, we have no overt evidence for the direct results of the preaching campaign of this period. It may be significant that Christian sources make no real claims for major missionizing gains. Arguments from silence are generally suspect, and we must be properly cautious. It is nonetheless striking that there are no broad assertions of proselytizing success to match the strident claims of victory in the debate of 1263.

It is possible that there was enhanced conversion of Jews to Christianity in western Christendom during the middle and last decades of the thirteenth century. Papal letters from the middle decades of the century often refer to such converts,<sup>[2]</sup> and occasional royal records, especially from France, indicate sums set aside for support of recent converts and the creation of facilities for them.<sup>[3]</sup> To be sure, there is no information on the thinking of these converts and no reason to suppose that their conversion stemmed from the preaching campaign. At best, we might surmise that the new preaching formed one element in a constellation of factors that sapped Jewish morale in western Christendom and led some members of the community to contemplate conversion. Clearly, however, there was no major crisis of identity in the Jewish communities of western Christendom at this juncture, which again leads us to suggest that the new proselytizing had limited or, more likely, negligible impact.

These negligible achievements notwithstanding, the ecclesiastical authorities of western Christendom remained committed to the initiative unleashed during the middle decades of the thirteenth century. At the beginning of this study, three criteria were established for "serious" missionizing: (1) the allocation of significant resources to the missionizing enterprise; (2) the establishment of permanent mechanisms for confronting the targeted group with the truth of Christianity; and (3) the development of argumentation aimed specifically at the targeted group and based on a realistic knowledge of that group's religious thinking. From the middle decades of the thirteenth century down through the close of the medieval period, the Roman Catholic Church continued its missionizing efforts along the lines sketched out

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earlier. Resources were regularly allocated to the study of the language of a number of groups targeted for missionizing, among them the Jews. The device of compulsory attendance at

missionizing sermons or at forced debates was a regular feature of late medieval life, one that affected the Jewish communities of western Christendom deeply. Finally, the creative new line of missionizing argumentation, while not pursued single-mindedly, became a regular and heavily utilized weapon in the arsenal of the missionizers. The first two commitments are widely recognized. We will focus on the third, which has not been studied in sufficient depth. Our brief sketch of the use of this new line of argumentation is intended simply as an overview, with a more detailed and nuanced treatment postponed for a separate study. Full-scale treatment of this argumentation and of the Jewish response is surely a scholarly desideratum.

Interestingly, the proselytizing efforts of the latter decades of the thirteenth century and the first decades of the fourteenth century indicate a shift away from the new line of argumentation pioneered by Friar Paul and refined by Friar Raymond. To be sure, at no point was there open repudiation of these earlier efforts. It is clear, however, that missionizing thinking took a strikingly different turn not long after Friar Raymond's completion of the *Pugio Fidei*.

The most prominent missionizing figure during the last decades of the thirteenth century and the opening decades of the fourteenth was surely Raymond Lull. This remarkably energetic and multifaceted personality was powerfully motivated toward missionizing.<sup>[4]</sup> His immediate reactions to the vision that drew him from his earlier worldly existence all revolved around this central theme. More specifically, he committed himself to a threefold plan of action that included (1) "to give up his life and soul for the sake of his [God's] love and honor; and to accomplish this by carrying out the task of converting to his worship and service the Saracens who in such numbers surrounded the Christians on all sides"; (1) to "write a book, the best in the world, against the errors of the unbelievers"; and (3) "to go to the pope, to kings, and to Christian princes to incite them and get them to institute, in whatever kingdoms and provinces might be appropriate, monasteries in which selected monks and others fit for the task would be brought together to learn the languages of the Saracens and other unbelievers, so that, from among those properly instructed in such a place, one could always find the right people ready to be sent out to preach and demonstrate to the Saracens and other unbelievers the

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holy truth of the Catholic faith, which is that of Christ."<sup>[5]</sup> Raymond Lull did achieve the last of these three goals and strove mightily toward realizing the first two, in the process making himself the dominant figure in late-thirteenth-and early-fourteenth-century Christian missionizing.

In a sense, Raymond Lull was directly related to the circle that stands at the core of this study, a circle that emanated from the dominating presence of Friar Raymond of Penyafort. Lull embarked on a series of pilgrimages, at the end of which "he prepared to set out for Paris, for the sake of learning grammar there and acquiring other knowledge required for his tasks. But he was dissuaded from making this trip by the arguments and advice of his relatives and friends and most of all of Brother Ramon of the Dominicans, who had formerly compiled the *Decretals* for Pope Gregory IX, and those counsels made him return to his own city, that is, to Majorca."<sup>[6]</sup> J. N. Hillgarth, in his important study of Lull and Lullism, suggests that in this decision lay both positive and negative implications. On the negative side, Lull was deprived of contact with the most important contemporary teachers and libraries. The result, according to Hillgarth, is obvious. "The somewhat 'old-fashioned' nature of Lull's philosophy, which belongs, in many ways, more to the twelfth century than to his own age, must in large part be ascribed simply to his lack of contact, during his years of study, with any leading centre of Christian thought." Weighed against this negative is a powerful positive: "Majorca could give something unavailable at Paris, a thorough training in Arabic, together with an intimate knowledge of Islam as a living faith. These two things combined to give him a unique advantage over almost all the great scholastics who were his contemporaries, Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure, Duns Scotus."<sup>[7]</sup> Ultimately, Lull eschewed the rigorous scholasticism of Aquinas, which could not have provided the basis for

popular missionizing, as well as the cleverly innovative thrusts of Friar Paul and Friar Raymond. He developed instead a popularly oriented (although highly complex) system of rational argumentation, intended to serve against all who shared common reasonable assumptions.

When we look into Lull's argumentation addressed to the Jews, we find no evidence of the innovative approach taken by Friar Paul or Friar Raymond. Generally, Lull treated the Jews along with the Muslims, although, clearly, the latter were the focus of his interests. Thus, for example, in *The Book of the Gentile and the Three Wise Men*, he

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involves a Jewish spokesman alongside a Christian and a Muslim. All three proceed from the same set of reasonable assumptions, provided at the outset by Lady Intelligence. While the principles that each strives to prove differ, the same kind of reasoning is adduced by each. It was obviously Lull's view (or least his hope) that a common line of reasoning might be achieved and that this common line of reasoning would lead ineluctably to acceptance of Christian truth.<sup>[8]</sup> Interestingly, in the one treatise that Lull devoted solely to the Jews, the primary line of argumentation is directly from the Scriptures, utilizing time-tested but shopworn exegetical and philosophical claims unlikely to have any significant impact on a thirteenth- or fourteenth-century Jewish audience.<sup>[9]</sup> Again, the overwhelming sense is that Lull was almost oblivious to the innovative thrusts that had come so recently out of the circle surrounding Raymond of Penyafort.

On reflection, it is not difficult to suggest some obvious reasons for the eclipse of the new missionizing argumentation. The new approach of Friar Paul and Friar Raymond suffered from two major technical deficiencies. First, it was not generalizable, that is to say, it could be used with the Jews only. The effort expended on this line of argumentation served no ancillary purpose with the Muslims or with any other group of nonbelievers. Given the limited interest in missionizing among the Jews and the extensive energies required for this new tack, the investment was heavy and questionable. Second, maintaining this line of argumentation necessitated an ongoing commitment of energies. Friar Raymond had created a remarkable handbook of rabbinic materials; however, a novice could clearly not utilize these materials effectively among the Jews. For the *Pugio Fidei* to be used properly, the missionizing preachers would have had to have some independent expertise in talmudic literature. Again, the issue is one of worthwhile investment.

When we take into consideration the additional and related facts that the new technique seemingly produced little in the way of conversion and that the Jews had fairly quickly adumbrated meaningful lines of response, the reluctance of the Church to make a further commitment to this costly new line of argumentation becomes readily understandable. As we have already suggested, the new argumentation was not dismissed by the Jews, despite the bantering tone of the narrative of Rabbi Moses ben Nahman. In fact, it was taken seriously by a number of important figures, and well-constructed rebuttals were fashioned. Several lines of response predominated. In the first place, the

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selective use of rabbinic materials by the Christian side probably constituted the most telling weakness in the new approach. To postulate arbitrarily that certain rabbinic materials (those that were useful to the Christian case) were truthful and meaningful and that others (those that contradicted the Christian case) were false and vicious hardly constituted a broad and responsible approach to the vast corpus of talmudic teachings. While there was a certain impressiveness about the imposing array of materials gathered by Friar Raymond and his associates, the essential

arbitrariness of the approach could not be masked. Jews armed with the full range of rabbinic materials could pose difficult questions from texts that the Christian preachers might peremptorily dismiss. Christian dismissal of these texts, however, would ultimately have no effect on the Jews themselves. For the Jews, the notion of a vast corpus of materials and the resultant necessity of approaching these diverse materials from a reasoned exegetical perspective meant that the issues that Christian preachers might raise served merely as the goad to a reconsideration of texts and—at most—to occasional revision in the understanding of these texts. Since the challenge of thirteenth-century philosophy had already sensitized the Jews of western Christendom to the need for occasional reevaluation of classical texts, the new challenge from the Christian missionizers was not insuperable.

There was a second major line of Jewish response; this was to emphasize the inherent implausibility of the entire approach developed by Friar Paul. The notion that authoritative Jewish texts in fact bore Christological implications to which the Jews had over many centuries been blind strained credulity. Jews had, for a long time, been inured to the Christian claim that they failed to understand the Scriptures properly, and they had long before decisively rejected that claim. Now, for Christians to assert that the same thing was true with regard to their rabbinic heritage was likely ultimately to make as little or less impact among the Jews as the prior claims of Christological meaning in the Scriptures. The question that Nahmanides claims to have posed even before the actual discussion began in Barcelona remained a basic Jewish reaction. That is, it was not a debating tactic but rather a deeply felt conviction. That the rabbis might have held Christian beliefs without truly understanding the full implications of these beliefs was not credible to medieval Jews, and they were unlikely to be swayed by such suggestions. Thus, in a real sense, the very strength of the new approach was ultimately its weakness. The idea of attacking

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the Jews from their own literature had a kind of perverse appeal, but, in the final analysis, an assault from some other neutral grounds (e.g., the rational-mystical grounds proposed by Raymond Lull) would be far likelier to succeed.

All these issues—the inherent difficulties in the new missionizing argumentation and the development of meaningful lines of Jewish response—serve to explain the shift away from this line of thinking that is so obvious in Raymond Lull, the dominant missionizing figure of the close of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth. They do not signal the demise of the new argumentation, however. It remained a powerful element in Christian missionizing all through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Let us cite briefly three indexes of the ongoing utilization of the new argumentation pioneered by Friar Paul and refined so elegantly by Friar Raymond.

During the third and fourth decades of the fourteenth century, Spanish Jewry was challenged by the most impressive of the medieval converts from Judaism to Christianity, Abner of Burgos, who became Alfonso of Valladolid. Baer, who was long fascinated with AbnerAlfonso and had planned to issue an edition of his works, said this of him: "The apostate Abner of Burgos exceeded in intrinsic merit and in the depth of his influence all the polemical opponents of the Jews during the Middle Ages."<sup>[10]</sup> Perhaps the most persuasive gauge of the significance of the man lies in the number of Jewish responses to Abner-Alfonso that have been preserved as part of medieval Jewish polemical literature.<sup>[11]</sup> Clearly deeply steeped in both traditional Jewish learning and in the philosophic writings of the period, he wrote voluminously in an effort to convince his former fellow Jews of the truth of the Christian faith that he had espoused. Utilization of the new technique of adducing rabbinic texts in support of Christian truth abounds in his writings. My own close analysis of a letter by Abner devoted to such rabbinic proofs of Christian truth suggested that he was highly original in his argumentation, in no sense relying on Friar Raymond's massive compendium.<sup>[12]</sup> In any case, his extensive utilization of the approach is beyond question.

It is interesting to note the extent to which his Jewish opponents perceived this use of rabbinic materials as central to Abner-Alfonso's teachings. Thus, for example, in introducing his book, '*Ezer ha-Emunah*, the fourteenth-century Rabbi Moses of Tordesillas notes the valuable twelfth-century manual composed by Jacob ben Reuben and suggests that it no longer suffices because of new turns that have

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taken place during the intervening two centuries. He notes in particular the writings of Abner-Alfonso and what he sees as their perversion of rabbinic teachings in the service of Christian truth.<sup>[13]</sup> This brief notice alerts us both to the importance of this particular convert and to the centrality of the new argumentation in his writings. What is more, after detailing a series of four encounters with former Jews, in which the books of the Bible and their alleged Christological implications were debated, Rabbi Moses goes on to indicate that subsequently he was forced into an additional debate by a student of Abner-Alfonso who was determined to adduce his teacher's proofs of Christian truth based on rabbinic texts. It is also striking that this student of Abner-Alfonso was not of Jewish extraction; like Friar Raymond, he was a born Christian who had amassed the skills to read and utilize rabbinic sources.<sup>[14]</sup> From Abner-Alfonso's own writings and the reactions of his Jewish respondents, it is clear that use of rabbinic materials, along the lines encountered throughout this study, was central to the missionizing enterprise of this crucial figure.

The same is true for the remarkable disputation engineered by yet another convert from Judaism to Christianity, the Tortosa disputation arranged and conducted by Joshua ha-Lorki-Gerónimo of Santa Fé.<sup>[15]</sup> This staged missionizing debate, obviously modeled after the Barcelona disputation of 1263, came at a disastrous juncture in Jewish history—the aftermath of the catastrophic riots of 1391. A dispirited Jewry, depleted by loss of life and by conversion of thousands of its members, was subjected once more to an intense proselytizing experience that achieved (from the Christian perspective) major successes. Even a casual look at the substantial data that have survived indicates immediately the dependence of the Tortosa confrontation on the earlier missionizing thrust. The ground rules at Tortosa were the same as those at Barcelona; the issue on which the Christian protagonist focused was precisely the first agenda item at Barcelona; the evidence for the advent of the Messiah came from rabbinic literature, based heavily on the earlier efforts of Friar Paul and Friar Raymond.

Let us complete this cursory look at the influence of the new missionizing argumentation by citing a bizarre work, the *Mirror of the New Christians*.<sup>[16]</sup> This sixteenth-century treatise by Friar Francis Machado was aimed at dispelling the errors of Portuguese New Christians and buttressing their loyalty to Christianity and its teachings. The problem of such insincere New Christians stemmed from

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the peculiar circumstances of the conversion of Portuguese Jewry, circumstances that eventuated in the creation of a large number of Portuguese New Christians who were in fact deeply devoted to their Jewish heritage. In attempting to combat what he saw as the errors of these New Christians, Friar Francis of course utilized biblical citations and references to the standard authorities of the Church. What is striking, however, is his use of a somewhat different set of sources. According to Frank Talmage, the editor of this work,

Machado's most frequently cited source in the *Mirror* is not Christian but rabbinic literature. Machado liberally cites the Targumin, the early Aramaic translations of the Bible attributed to Onkelos (Pentateuch) and Jonathan ben Uzziel (Prophets) as well as the paraphrastic Jerusalem Targum (Targum Yerushalmi) to the Pentateuch. Many too are the various quotations

from the Talmud as well as the various compilations of the midrash (rabbinic and medieval homiletico-exegetical literature).<sup>[17]</sup>

While Talmage suggests that it is not possible to identify the precise source or sources from which Machado drew his materials, the reliance upon the argumentation whose development has been analyzed here is unmistakable. The appearance of this argumentation in a sixteenth-century work designated for strengthening the faith of ostensible members of Christian society affords us an extreme and enlightening indication of the extent to which the new set of claims had been firmly fixed in the arsenal of Christian polemical literature from the thirteenth into the sixteenth century.

While continued Christian reliance on the argumentation developed by Friar Paul and refined by Friar Raymond is clearly evidenced in Christian sources, one more question remains to be posed—whether Jewish sources reflect an ongoing concern with this line of Christian attack. Here too the answer is positive. Inevitably, of course, Jews subjected directly to proselytizing assaults based on talmudic literature had to respond. Thus, the major Jewish respondents to the thrusts of Abner-Alfonso and those Jews summoned to represent their communities at Tortosa inevitably had to address themselves to the claims drawn from rabbinic sources. But beyond these immediate responses to the challenges imposed directly by Christian missionizers, the broad thrust was perceived as significant and occasioned long-range consideration and rebuttal. The surest indication of this ongoing concern with the new missionizing argumentation is

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Isaac Abravanel's comprehensive *Yeshu'ot Meshiho*<sup>[18]</sup>, a work devoted to broad consideration and rebuttal of the set of claims based on rabbinic texts.

*Yeshu'ot Meshiho* is the middle work of Abravanel's messianic trilogy.<sup>[19]</sup> In his introduction to the work, Abravanel indicates that after completing his *Ma'ayanei ha-Yeshu'a*, a work devoted to careful examination of the biblical sources that foretell Israel's redemption, he felt it necessary to examine rabbinic traditions to substantiate his own reading of the biblical evidence. He indicates a readiness to renounce his own findings if he finds them at odds with rabbinic understanding of the biblical data. At the same time, Abravanel announces quite explicitly another motivation for the writing of his *Yeshu'ot Meshiho*. He was alarmed at the loss of faith within the Jewish fold and at the attack on Jewish faith mounted by the Christian world in general and by former Jews in particular. Given the extensive utilization—for Abravanel, perversion—of rabbinic sources by these Christian missionizers, he felt it incumbent on himself to scrupulously examine rabbinic teachings so as to refute these harmful Christian thrusts. To be sure, Abravanel indicates that he will not reduce his work to the low level of polemics: he claims that his Jewish predecessors who had rebutted the thrusts of the new missionizing argumentation had often sacrificed truth to the exigencies of polemical confrontation. He claims he will take the high road of objective search for the true meaning of the rabbinic legacy.<sup>[20]</sup> The result is, in fact, a sophisticated treatment of the corpus of rabbinic messianic teachings. For our purposes, Abravanel's extensive effort is useful evidence of the extent to which the new argumentation had deeply penetrated the Jewish communities of the late fifteenth century and had come to be perceived as a significant threat to Jewish belief. As yet another index of the relationship of Abravanel's opus to the mid-thirteenth-century developments analyzed here, let me cite the four chapter headings around which Abravanel organizes his materials: (1) explication of the aggadot that seem to suggest that the Messiah has already come or will not come; (2) explication of that which is indicated in their [rabbis'] teachings that the Messiah has already been born and where he resides; (3) explication of rabbinic dicta that seem to suggest that the kingly Messiah will be like one of the heavenly host; and (4) explication of the aggadot that seem to suggest that, with the coming of the Messiah, the Torah of Moses will be annulled in its totality or in part.<sup>[21]</sup> This agenda strikes a familiar chord. Both the methodology and the sub-

stantive issues with which Isaac Abravanel was so deeply concerned reflect clearly the imprint of the new argumentation spawned by the intense proselytizing efforts of the mid-thirteenth century.

Thus, on every level, the new missionizing thrusts that we have studied maintained themselves for a number of centuries. The Church continued to train personnel devoted to the enterprise; it continued to successfully pressure the secular authorities to force their Jews to attend missionizing sermons and debates; its missionizing personnel continued to utilize the innovative argumentation that had been developed during the middle decades of the thirteenth century. The impact of these developments was substantial. To be sure, during the late thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, European Jewry was beset with a host of problems. The enhanced missionizing efforts to which these Jewish communities were subjected constituted but one of the challenges with which they had to contend. This challenge was, however, far from negligible.

## Implications

Having examined the immediate and long-term impact of the new missionizing campaign, we should conclude by attending to some of the important ancillary meanings of this innovative effort. What are some of the implications of this unprecedented proselytizing program?

In the first place, the innovative assault on the medieval Jews serves to reinforce the generally accepted picture of the middle decades of the thirteenth century. The concerted effort reveals the depths of the Christian commitment to winning over the nonbelieving world, the sure sense of intellectual superiority that characterized the period, and the latent insecurities that stimulated the massive effort to find new lines of religious argumentation. The preaching campaign among the Jews shows us yet another facet of the central thrusts of this crucial epoch. Because we can trace some of this campaign in detail, we have an unusually rich portrait of the intensive effort to win over new adherents through a not altogether consistent combination of coercion and intellection, again—as argued convincingly by Kedar—so fully characteristic of the period.<sup>[21]</sup>

Similarly, the new missionizing effort and the Jewish responses reflect accurately the material and spiritual state of mid-thirteenth-century Jewry in western Christendom. These Jews were still self-

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confident and vigorous in their defense of Jewish beliefs. This confidence and vigor is a reflection of the continued material strength of these Jewish communities. The serious erosion of the Jewish situation was, at this point, under way but had not yet developed to the point of undermining Jewish resources and will. Moreover, Jewish intellectual leadership of this period was involved in battles on a number of fronts, most strikingly, the need to protect traditional Jewish beliefs against the assault of the philosophers. As Marc Saperstein has shown fully for the hitherto-unknown Issac ben Yedaiah, many of the creative Jewish figures of this epoch were fully committed to reexamining precisely the literature utilized by Friar Paul and Friar Raymond.<sup>[22]</sup> While the focus of these efforts was to show that rabbinic teachings were not undermined by the pronouncements of the philosophers, it was only a small step to conduct a parallel investigation of the same kinds of sources in an effort to prove that they could in no way be utilized in the service of Christian truth. During the middle decades of the thirteenth century, the Jews of western Christendom were fully equipped to rebuff the new missionizing challenge.

It has recently been suggested that the innovative missionizing campaign of the mid-thirteenth century had an ominous implication, that it in fact formed an important component in a new view of Judaism and the Jews, a view that negated the traditional Jewish right to live within Christian society.<sup>[23]</sup> In his important study, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism*, Jeremy Cohen analyzes a number of developments that he believes reflect the emergence of this new and deleterious view of Judaism and the Jews.<sup>[24]</sup> Both the Barcelona confrontation and the *Pugio Fidei* figure prominently in Cohen's case for a new ecclesiastical ideology concerning both. Let us examine carefully his use of the material related to the missionizing campaign.

Cohen builds an elaborate scheme with regard to the Barcelona confrontation. He begins by noting the four-part agenda advanced by Friar Paul, claiming that the first and last of these four items were crucial. More precisely, according to Cohen, the last item—that Jewish law was null and void—was the key to Christian success, with the first item—that the Messiah had already come—serving as the foundation for this last, decisive assertion. In Cohen's words:

If Pablo did in fact hope to convert the Jews through his missionary and forensic efforts, proving this final proposition constituted the key to his success. The Jews had to be shown that their religion had become obso-

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lete. For even though a Christian polemicist could point to messianic allusions in biblical and rabbinic sources, he still had to define the significance and ramifications of these allusions for the Jews of his day—namely, that bespeaking the truth of Christianity, they invalidated contemporary Jewish observance—before the Jews would accept conversion.<sup>[25]</sup>

This assumption—that the fourth item on the agenda was the truly crucial one—leads Cohen to argue that this last issue must have been raised, despite the ostensible lack of reference to it in both the Latin and Hebrew records. "One finds it hard to believe that a skilled debater like Pablo would have neglected to mention this most crucial issue throughout the four days of discussion. The only alternative is to show that the friar did indeed try to demonstrate the invalidity of current Jewish observance but that he did so subtly, so as to allow for no direct refutation from Nahmanides but to achieve the desired effect nonetheless."<sup>[26]</sup> Cohen claims that the core of the confrontation was aimed at forcing Nahmanides to deny authoritative texts, thereby proving to all the distance between genuine Judaism and the contemporary deviation from it.

By placing Nahmanides in the position of having to deny classical rabbinic texts which supposedly proclaimed the advent of the messiah, those texts "authoritative among the Jews," Pablo endeavored to emphasize that Nahmanides and contemporary Jewry had broken with the faith of their ancient ancestors. . . . True Judaism would have dictated an acceptance of Jesus; the current Judaism of Nahmanides—the observance of Mosaic and rabbinic law—could thus not be orthodox. Simply by forcing Nahmanides to respond to his arguments—that is, to reject the textual evidence—for the first three propositions of the agenda, Pablo hoped cleverly to prove the fourth and most important: continued practice of the Judaism of rabbinic law now constituted doctrinal error for the most pious of Jews!<sup>[27]</sup>

Let us examine closely the elements in Cohen's case. First, the argument that the fourth item was the crucial one is untenable. Cohen suggests that proving the advent of the Messiah alone would not have sufficed—that contemporary Jewish practice had to be proved superfluous or, better, misguided. He proposes to show this from Nahmanides' opening statement, which was discussed earlier. Cohen claims that, in his opening statement, the rabbi charged the friar with the task of proving the nullity of Jewish practice. To cite Nahmanides' formulation:

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If these sages believed in the messianic role of Jesus, that he was truly the Messiah and that his faith and religion were true, and if they wrote these things from which Friar Paul intends to prove this, then how did they remain in the Jewish faith and in their former tradition? For they were surely Jews, remained in the Jewish faith, and died Jews.<sup>[28]</sup>

Cohen understands Nahmanides to be saying, "If the rabbis of the Talmud knew the Messiah had come and still practiced Judaism, how did Pablo's fourth proposition follow from his first? Why should medieval Jews forsake their religious observances and convert to Christianity?"<sup>[29]</sup> This, however, is clearly not what Nahmanides was saying. In fact, he stated the opposite. He did not grant that the rabbis might have believed in the advent of the Messiah and still remained Jews. Instead, he pointed to the unthinkable nature of that combination, arguing that there is no way that the rabbis could have believed that Jesus had been the promised Messiah and still remained Jews. Had the rabbis believed in Jesus as the Messiah, they would have had to abandon Judaism. The fact that they did not abandon Judaism is thus clear proof that they did not believe in Jesus as the Messiah. Rather than showing the centrality of the last item on the agenda, this passage shows the independence of the first item of the agenda (and, indeed, the second and the third items as well). Had Friar Paul been able to prove decisively that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, by convincing Jews that the Messiah had already come, or that the Messiah was intended to be both divine and human, or that the Messiah was fated to suffer and die, he would have thereby won the day. In a real sense, the fourth item was not necessary. If the case for Jesus as Messiah had been made convincingly, then the Jews should have left the fold. The fourth item was far from crucial; it was merely a further effort to discomfort the Jews, to sow seeds of doubt wherever possible.

If the fourth item on the agenda was not the crucial item, the question posed by Cohen concerning how the entire confrontation could pass without engaging the Jews on this crucial issue falls by the wayside as well. It is thus no longer necessary to seek the devious and subtle means by which this issue was allegedly joined, as Cohen does. In fact, Cohen's presentation of this approach fails as well. As we have seen, he argues that by forcing Nahmanides into the position of denying authoritative texts, Friar Paul succeeded in indicating a disparity between the Judaism of his epoch and classical Judaism. There are a number of problems with this argument. First, we have seen that de-

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nial of rabbinic texts was not the only tactic employed by Rabbi Moses ben Nahman. Second, Rabbi Moses denied only a certain class of rabbinic texts (and that only under specific circumstances, as shown above); he certainly never denied biblical or halachic texts. Forcing Rabbi Moses to reject certain aggadic statements does not constitute proof that "Nahmanides and contemporary Jewry had broken with the faith of their ancient ancestors." Most important, the conclusion that Cohen reaches does not square with the agenda item as spelled out in the sources. To force the rabbi to deny Jewish *auctoritates* is hardly the same thing as proving that "the laws and ceremonials ceased and should have ceased after the advent of the said Messiah."<sup>[30]</sup> In constructing his case, Cohen has distorted the meaning of the Barcelona agenda. Our analysis of Barcelona and the *Pugio Fidei*, which took cognizance of both the Christian thrusts and the Jewish counterthrusts, has indicated straightforwardly what was intended in the last agenda item: Friar Paul intended to show that rabbinic texts themselves spoke of annulment of the law with the advent of the Messiah. Basing his final argument on his (hopefully) successful first argument, he intended to prove to the Jews—as Friar Raymond subsequently tried to do—that Jewish law was now abrogated because of the advent of the Messiah. Again, as was true throughout this missionizing campaign, there is really nothing new in the substance of the claim; what is new is the means proposed for proving this age-old Christian contention.

Thus, on close inspection, Cohen's case based on the Barcelona confrontation dissolves. The fourth item on the agenda was in no sense the crucial item; it is fully plausible that this issue was never raised at Barcelona. Friar Paul's intention was not to prove that present-day Judaism was a deviation from classical Judaism; his last goal was to prove the age-old Christian contention that Jewish law had been abrogated by the coming of the Messiah but to do so on the basis of rabbinic texts. There is, therefore, no evidence in the Barcelona confrontation of a new ideological view of Judaism and the Jews.

Cohen attempts to buttress his case for a new view of contemporary Judaism and Jews through an examination of Friar Raymond's *Pugio Fidei* as well. Once again, the effort is unsuccessful. After reviewing aspects of the preaching of Friar Raymond and the broad contents of the *Pugio*, Cohen proceeds to his arguments for a new

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view of Jewish history, present-day Judaism, and the Jews. According to Cohen, Martini distinguishes three different genera of expressions of Jewish belief. First, he speaks of the law and prophecies of the Old Testament, which along with their correct interpretations would, albeit prefiguratively, establish the truth of Christianity. These interpretations or *traditiones* were preserved by the Jews of the Bible as part of their oral tradition, which eventually came to be recorded by the rabbis of the Talmud. Such correct interpretations of Scripture must be extracted from rabbinic literature "like pearls out of a very great dungheap." Second, in contradistinction to these select few *traditiones*, the vast majority of talmudic teachings are described as the aforementioned dungheap, the head of a dragon or toad, or the venomous sting of the bee. This body of literature, replete with "absurdities," propagates the false beliefs "regarding the messiah and so many other matters which the Jews have believed from the time of Christ." Third, Martini identifies his present enemy, "the perfidy of the modern Jews," which expresses itself as both "impudence" and "evil." It is against this third brand of Judaism that he intends to direct the Christological *traditiones* of the first.<sup>[31]</sup>

Cohen's description of the first two categories is excellent. It is a concise and accurate summation of Friar Raymond's introductory statement of the two sets of traditions reflected in talmudic literature. Cohen's third category, however, does not exist. To put the matter a bit more sharply, the purported third set of beliefs is simply the sum total of the first two, with the scales heavily weighted in favor of the second.

Cohen proceeds to argue that, for Friar Raymond, the three sets of expressions of Jewish belief correspond to three groups in Jewish history. (1) "The first group consisted of the Hebrews of the Old Testament."<sup>[32]</sup> (2) The second group consisted of "the Jews of the Talmud, who lived during and after the life of Jesus."<sup>[33]</sup> (3) "The third group of Jews in history, the *Iudei moderni* of Martini's own day, maintained the perverse beliefs of the rabbis who preceded them, inheriting and persisting in all the vices and insanities of talmudic Judaism."<sup>[34]</sup> Once again, the tripartite scheme means nothing. There are really only two groups for Friar Raymond (and all mainstream Christian theologians): pre-Christian Jews and post-Christian Jews.

More significant than the futility of this tripartite scheme is Cohen's failure to show any significant innovation in Friar Raymond's view of rabbinic Judaism. While he quotes copiously and well the friar's harsh denunciations of the Talmud and the rabbis, at no point

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does Cohen show us how this view deviates from prior conceptions of Judaism and the Jews. That Friar Raymond's formulation was unusually vituperative can be readily agreed; that it was in any way theologically innovative is not demonstrated. For, after all, prior Christian views of the Jews are hardly laudatory with regard to Jewish law and lore. The traditional assumption was that the Jews of Jesus' lifetime had misread their Scriptures and had, as a result, failed to acknowledge Jesus as the promised Messiah. Rabbinic literature—poorly known, to be sure—was assumed to be the continuation of Jewish misunderstanding of the covenant. Once more, Friar Raymond is introducing no new notion here. Rather, as stressed repeatedly throughout this study, his contribution lay in a knowledge of rabbinic literature far richer than that generally available and in creative utilization of that knowledge for Christian missionizing purposes. Friar Raymond, like Friar Paul, made no break with prior conceptions of Judaism and the Jews; they both argued that Judaism and the Jews had not been understood in sufficient detail. More specifically, the extent of harmful and intolerable Jewish teaching had not, according to the mid-thirteenth-century

Dominicans, been properly assessed, and the potentially useful talmudic exegesis and dicta had not been sufficiently exploited.

Let me conclude these comments on Cohen's analysis by drawing together the two seemingly divergent tendencies just now noted—condemnation of the Talmud and exploitation of the Talmud—in a fashion different from that proposed by Cohen. At the end of his discussion of Friar Raymond, Cohen contends that his understanding of Friar Paul and Friar Raymond facilitates the solution of a problem that has long intrigued historians of this period: how could the Church in general and the friars in particular, who had begun to condemn the Talmud to the stake in the 1240s, suddenly begin, only a few decades later, to argue from the Talmud against the Jews ?<sup>[35]</sup>

Cohen's solution to this seemingly vexing problem is to argue that both approaches reflect the underlying new position with regard to Judaism and the Jews. My analysis has led in a different direction. I propose that neither campaign reflects a new understanding of Judaism and the Jews. Rather, to use the terminology of Friar Raymond, one might legitimately distinguish three types of rabbinic teaching: incorrect but innocuous; incorrect and intolerable; correct (i.e., Chris-

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tological). The first were and remained lamentable but tolerable; the second would have always been unacceptable; the third should have always been exploited. The innovation of the mid-thirteenth century lay not in adumbrating new positions but in gleaning newly detailed information with regard to the materials in the second and third categories. On the basis of the old theory and the new information, the Dominicans set out to do what had to be done—eliminate harmful teachings and exploit the correct and useful ones.

Thus, it seems to me that the proofs adduced for the alleged new ideological view of the Jews from the missionizing campaign, and indeed from the assault on the Talmud as well, do not sustain the argument. In fact, the deleterious activities of the mendicants can be readily understood without recourse to a new ideological stance with regard to Judaism and the Jews. The prior Augustinian tradition presented and analyzed by Cohen was somewhat more flexible than he allows. All the negative activities of the friars (negative from the Jewish perspective) can be readily understood within the context of this earlier ecclesiastical view. For the prior Augustinian stance in no sense afforded the Jews carte blanche with regard to religious and social behaviors. The clear understanding always was that the Jews must behave in ways that would entail no harm to the Christian society that had extended hospitality to them. To cite the most famous formulation of this theory, "Just as the Jews ought not enjoy license to presume to do in their synagogues more than permitted by law, so too in those [privileges] conceded to them they should not suffer curtailment."<sup>[36]</sup> What this traditional formulation does is to emphasize equally Jewish rights and responsibilities. The major responsibility was always understood as the duty to live in a manner that would entail no harm to the Christian majority. Thus, as the mendicant orders, charged with the core task of ensuring the doctrinal purity of Christian society, began to function, it was almost inevitable that Jewish teachings perceived as harmful to the Christian faith and to Christian society would come under the scrutiny of these orders. The mendicant assault on the Talmud requires for its understanding no appeal to a new ideological stance on the part of the Church. The old ideology made ample provision for an attack on any teachings that could be construed as a breach of conduct on the part of the Jewish minority.

There was a second elastic clause in the traditional view of the Jewish place in Christian society. That clause involved the issue of conversion of the Jews. While forcible conversion was eschewed (indeed, Co-

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hen suggests no alteration of this traditional stance in the purported new view) and total conversion of the Jews was pushed off to the time of the Second Coming (in fact, it was to serve as one of the signs of the dawning of the age of full redemption), Christian responsibility to convert individual Jews through rational persuasion and generous behavior was never denied or abandoned in theory. To be sure, there was little serious pre-thirteenth-century effort to carry out this mandate, as we have seen. As a more mature, self-confident, and aggressive Christian society emerged in thirteenth-century western Christendom and as that society began to reach out and address its message more and more intensely to its own membership and to its major monotheistic rival, the world of Islam, it is not at all surprising that part of this new energy should be directed at the older monotheistic sister community, the Jews. To the extent that the mendicant orders bore primary responsibility for the preaching effort in general, it was inevitable that they should shoulder the burden of missionizing among the Jews specifically. Again, no new theory is called for; the old Augustinian view made ample provision for such proselytizing efforts.

In both these areas—scrutiny of Jewish self-expression and missionizing efforts among the Jews—there is no need to posit a new theory. The old theory fully justified and indeed required such activities. As noted, the traditional theory always had to be seen against a particular societal backdrop. An earlier, less mature, and less aggressive age allowed the Jews of western Christendom more latitude in selfexpression and confronted them with far fewer conversionary efforts. The new spiritual ambience of the mid-thirteenth century produced a new set of pressures, fully comprehensible within the old theoretical framework but actualized by the new circumstances of European civilization. The mendicants, in their general activities and in their specifically anti-Jewish programs, reflected this newly aggressive ambience and, at the same time, reinforced it considerably.

While I have disputed Cohen's assertion of a new theological view regarding Judaism and the Jews implicit in the missionizing campaign that we have examined, I agree with his sense of deteriorating Jewish circumstances and of an ecclesiastical—or more narrowly mendicant—role in this deterioration.<sup>[32]</sup> In a number of ways, the missionizing campaign certainly contributed to the increasingly negative perception of the Jews that developed in thirteenth-century western Christendom.

Both Reuven Bonfils and Cohen have focused on the viciously negative portrayal of Jews and Judaism in the *Pugio Fidei*, the former in an independent study of the book and the latter as part of his broad reassessment of the thirteenth-century Church and its stance toward the Jews.<sup>[33]</sup> In the course of our examination of the missionizing argumentation presented by Friar Raymond, we too have had ample opportunity to note in passing some of the harshness of Friar Raymond's formulations. What precisely is the meaning of this harshness? Unfortunately, we possess little else from the pen of Friar Raymond than his proselytizing manuals. Evidence from other figures from the period suggests that the same individual could on different occasions make statements that were remarkably harsh or strikingly moderate. The most obvious example is the late-thirteenth-century Raymond Lull. Lull has left a vast corpus of writings, and, as a result, it is possible to note the use of a variety of tones for different circumstances. In his novel *Felix*, Lull has a harsh passage on the Jews. The passage speaks of a hermit who went all through the city so that he could feel joyful whenever he saw God was loved and known, and so that for any contrary thing he could weep and beg God's mercy in order that God ordain that he be loved and known. One day it came to pass that this hermit entered the synagogue of the Jews, where he heard them cursing Jesus Christ, without giving the hermit a thought, since they assumed he was a Jew. This holy man felt great displeasure at the thought that the Christian king allowed people to remain in his city who were against the king's religion and dishonored that Lord who was the king's Lord.<sup>[34]</sup>

Balanced against this harsh depiction is his *Book of the Gentile and the Three Wise Men*, in which the three sages—a Jew, a Christian, and a Muslim—treat each other with unusual respect.

At the end of the lengthy discussion, in which each sage presents the case for the truth of his faith, the three leave the gentile prior to the announcement of his choice of religion, so that they might continue unobstructed in their own discussions of truth and error. This is a remarkable ending, since, in general, the tendency is for the author of such dialogues to award the palm of victory to the spokesman for his faith.<sup>[40]</sup> What I suggest, then, is that we must examine carefully the context and implications of Friar Raymond's harshness.

As we have already noted, the *Pugio Fidei* was composed as a lengthy and technical manual for missionizers; it was certainly not intended directly for the Jews or for a popular Christian audience either.

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What, then, would be the point of the recurrent vituperation that characterizes the book? The simplest answer would be that these were the genuine views of Friar Raymond himself, which he wished to communicate to his readers. While that is a possibility, it is far from a certainty. Are there any conceivable utilitarian purposes to this vituperation? In fact, there are a few. One is to discourage any Christian reader from being attracted to the Jewish materials that Friar Raymond had gathered. Friar Raymond's broad sense is that there are true and false, beneficial and vicious rabbinic teachings. The true and beneficial correspond to Christian truth; the false and vicious are those doctrines that dissent from Christian truth. One of the values of the recurrent vituperation is to forcefully remind the potential Christian reader-missionizer that he is not to be overly drawn to the positive teachings and that he is to recollect constantly the larger context of error in which the positive teachings are, according to Friar Raymond, embedded. Moreover, as we have emphasized throughout this study, effective missionizing always involved both a positive and a negative thrust—proving the truth of one's own faith and the error of the opposing system. The negative sallies against Judaism may also have been intended to remind the missionizer of the purported absurdity of the Jewish position and the need to drive home to the Jewish audience precisely that absurdity. Thus, the negativism may be more than the author's simple pique with the Jews; it may in fact be traceable to the very purpose of the work as a missionizing manual. If the work had been intended directly for Jewish eyes, then the harshness might well have been counterproductive. Since it was intended essentially for potential Christian proselytizers, the harshness did have a number of roles to play.

The missionizing context of Friar Raymond's harsh statements must be constantly borne in mind. It seems unwise to extrapolate from the missionizing context a general position vis-à-vis the Jews. The missionizing context is, after all, inherently aggressive. While the traditional Christian stance toward the Jews asserts that they are in error but that their errors can be—and, in fact, should be—temporarily tolerated, the missionizing stance, while not formally repudiating that toleration, does emphasize the errors rather than the toleration. Every effort to missionize among the medieval Jews bent the system in the direction of an emphasis on error rather than toleration, and the massive campaign of the mid-thirteenth century is no exception. In making the case for the conversion of the Jews, the organizers and spokesmen of this campaign necessarily came down hard-

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est on the shortcomings of the Jews and the need to highlight these shortcomings to the Jewish audience. In the process, there was an inevitable emphasis on this element in the complex mix that constituted ecclesiastical policy with regard to the Jews. This emphasis should not be

overstated. It need not be taken to signal a thoroughly new policy on Judaism; it might better be seen as a time-honored thrust that inevitably skewed the fragile balance in Church stance toward the aggressively negative. In this regard, I again find myself in disagreement with Cohen's broad reading of the missionizing campaign as the sign of a new Church position that in effect overturned the prior tradition of toleration. I suggest, rather, that this missionizing campaign merely reflects an inherent instability in the traditional and fragile Church position with regard to the Jews. At the moment that the missionizing endeavor was set into motion, the tenuous combination that characterized the Church's view of Judaism and the Jews—the ambiguous combination of toleration and repudiation—was destabilized in the direction of repudiation. This is not a new doctrine; it is realization of some of the negative potential inherent in the old and traditional and complex Church doctrine with respect to Judaism and the Jews; its implications are seriously harmful to the Jews.

There is more. Every serious effort to proselytize among the Jews had as a concomitant the potential for arousing significant ancillary hostility against the Jews. Such serious efforts, after all, always began with a sense of the obvious truth in Christian teaching (underlying insecurity notwithstanding). Given the fact that substantial resources were marshaled in order to bring this perceived Christian truth to the Jewish masses and that these efforts achieved little success, the result had to be a sense of disappointment and frustration and, not surprisingly, a deepened sense of what Christians often perceived as the fundamental irrationality of the Jews. To put matters in the context of this study, after long resisting Christian truth claims based on the Scriptures, on rational considerations, and on empirical evidence, the Jews were confronted with massive argumentation from their own postbiblical literature. The missionizers' sense was that this new line of argumentation could hardly fail to break through Jewish resistance. When, in fact, it did fail, the inevitable by-product was a hardening of Christian attitudes toward the Jews. These people, so long viewed as recalcitrant, revealed themselves once more—to Christian eyes—as incapable of seeing the obvious truth.

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In this sense, of course, every serious missionizing effort was ultimately bad news for medieval Jewry. One of two things had to eventuate: either Jews would convert in some numbers or Christians would be reinforced in their negative views of the Jews. The most massive effort at winning over Jews ever undertaken had inevitably to produce a significant level of anger and frustration with its failure. For the Jews, then, the essential problem lay not in a specifically anti-Jewish thrust to the new missionizing but rather in the aggressive environment that turned Christian sensitivities to the missionizing endeavor. Once this missionizing effort was set into motion and achieved only minimal results, inevitably the image of the Jews had to suffer further in the eyes of those who had committed themselves to the campaign. In this sense, then, the proselytizing of the mid-thirteenth century had deleterious results for the Jewish image in western Christendom. Old stereotypes of Jewish blindness and obtuseness were inevitably reinforced. This occurred not out of a specifically anti-Jewish hue to the missionizing or out of an initially negative disposition on the part of the missionizers. The culprit was ultimately the new environment that spawned conversionist ardor. Just as the aggressive thrust of eleventh- and twelfth-century crusading almost ineluctably brought in its wake harmful implications for European Jewry, so too the not unrelated inclination to heightened missionizing that made itself manifest during the thirteenth century bore similarly baneful implications. An already negative European image of the Jews was deepened; in yet one more way, the Jews were perceived as incapable of comprehending and assimilating obvious truths.

Neither the initial missionizing campaign nor the ancillary negative stereotyping constituted the most serious impingement on Jewish life during the middle decades of the thirteenth century. In a variety of ways—economic, political, and social—the circumstances of the Jewish communities of western Christendom deteriorated badly during these years.<sup>[41]</sup> While not the harshest blow suffered at this juncture, the proselytizing effort and its inevitable concomitants further

exacerbated an already difficult situation. To be sure, while they are only two of many destructive developments that characterize this unstable epoch, they are factors of considerable significance in the obvious decline of western Christendom's Jewries during the middle years of the thirteenth century.

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## **Immediate and Long-Term Impact**

The aggressive environment of the mid-thirteenth century, intensified by a measure of uncertainty and anxiety, produced a major missionizing assault on European Jewry. New and substantial resources were allocated to the proselytizing effort, the support of major secular authorities was enlisted in forcing Jewish attendance at missionizing sermons and disputations, and innovative argumentation was developed. The heart of the innovative argumentation lay in the utilization of rabbinic literature—both exegesis of the Scriptures and freestanding aggadic and halachic dicta—to confirm Christian truths or to deny and deride traditional Jewish doctrines.

Is it possible to gauge the immediate impact of the new missionizing effort? The direct answer to this question is that it is not. Sources that would allow us to do this are not available. Most significant is the lack of personal materials from the Jews of this period, for it is only such observations that would enable us to identify the motivations of Jews struggling with the issue of conversion or of Jews who had actually made the decision to convert. Even external evidence for the ebb and flow of Jewish conversion to Christianity in the middle and late decades of the thirteenth century is lacking. Thus, a definitive assessment of the impact of the new missionizing is impossible.

A few sketchy suggestions can be made. There is no evidence to suggest the immediate efficacy of the conversionist sermons of the period from the 1240s through the 1270s. Neither the Christian nor the Jewish sources indicate tangible successes for the new missionizing effort. Only one source addresses the immediate impact of the new preaching—a Jewish account that proudly claims that despite difficult circumstances, not a single Jew responded positively to Friar Paul's proselytizing in Paris. The Jewish author claims that of the more than one thousand Jews forced to hear the missionizing sermons, "not one of us turned to the religion of vanity and lies."<sup>11</sup> This is an interesting

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report. On the one hand, by noting the lack of conversion so prominently, the author indicates the gravity of the situation. It was clearly not unthinkable for him that Jews might have converted. This is reflective of the seriousness of the new enterprise. On the other hand, the spirited contention that not one Jew was truly attracted to Christianity does attest that Friar Paul's preaching had no discernible impact on his Paris audience. Beyond this, we have no overt evidence for the direct results of the preaching campaign of this period. It may be significant that Christian

sources make no real claims for major missionizing gains. Arguments from silence are generally suspect, and we must be properly cautious. It is nonetheless striking that there are no broad assertions of proselytizing success to match the strident claims of victory in the debate of 1263.

It is possible that there was enhanced conversion of Jews to Christianity in western Christendom during the middle and last decades of the thirteenth century. Papal letters from the middle decades of the century often refer to such converts,<sup>[2]</sup> and occasional royal records, especially from France, indicate sums set aside for support of recent converts and the creation of facilities for them.<sup>[3]</sup> To be sure, there is no information on the thinking of these converts and no reason to suppose that their conversion stemmed from the preaching campaign. At best, we might surmise that the new preaching formed one element in a constellation of factors that sapped Jewish morale in western Christendom and led some members of the community to contemplate conversion. Clearly, however, there was no major crisis of identity in the Jewish communities of western Christendom at this juncture, which again leads us to suggest that the new proselytizing had limited or, more likely, negligible impact.

These negligible achievements notwithstanding, the ecclesiastical authorities of western Christendom remained committed to the initiative unleashed during the middle decades of the thirteenth century. At the beginning of this study, three criteria were established for "serious" missionizing: (1) the allocation of significant resources to the missionizing enterprise; (2) the establishment of permanent mechanisms for confronting the targeted group with the truth of Christianity; and (3) the development of argumentation aimed specifically at the targeted group and based on a realistic knowledge of that group's religious thinking. From the middle decades of the thirteenth century down through the close of the medieval period, the Roman Catholic Church continued its missionizing efforts along the lines sketched out

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earlier. Resources were regularly allocated to the study of the language of a number of groups targeted for missionizing, among them the Jews. The device of compulsory attendance at missionizing sermons or at forced debates was a regular feature of late medieval life, one that affected the Jewish communities of western Christendom deeply. Finally, the creative new line of missionizing argumentation, while not pursued single-mindedly, became a regular and heavily utilized weapon in the arsenal of the missionizers. The first two commitments are widely recognized. We will focus on the third, which has not been studied in sufficient depth. Our brief sketch of the use of this new line of argumentation is intended simply as an overview, with a more detailed and nuanced treatment postponed for a separate study. Full-scale treatment of this argumentation and of the Jewish response is surely a scholarly desideratum.

Interestingly, the proselytizing efforts of the latter decades of the thirteenth century and the first decades of the fourteenth century indicate a shift away from the new line of argumentation pioneered by Friar Paul and refined by Friar Raymond. To be sure, at no point was there open repudiation of these earlier efforts. It is clear, however, that missionizing thinking took a strikingly different turn not long after Friar Raymond's completion of the *Pugio Fidei*.

The most prominent missionizing figure during the last decades of the thirteenth century and the opening decades of the fourteenth was surely Raymond Lull. This remarkably energetic and multifaceted personality was powerfully motivated toward missionizing.<sup>[4]</sup> His immediate reactions to the vision that drew him from his earlier worldly existence all revolved around this central theme. More specifically, he committed himself to a threefold plan of action that included (1) "to give up his life and soul for the sake of his [God's] love and honor; and to accomplish this by carrying out the task of converting to his worship and service the Saracens who in such numbers surrounded the Christians on all sides"; (1) to "write a book, the best in the world, against the errors of the unbelievers"; and (3) "to go to the pope, to kings, and to Christian princes to incite them and get them to institute, in whatever kingdoms and provinces might be appropriate,

monasteries in which selected monks and others fit for the task would be brought together to learn the languages of the Saracens and other unbelievers, so that, from among those properly instructed in such a place, one could always find the right people ready to be sent out to preach and demonstrate to the Saracens and other unbelievers the

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holy truth of the Catholic faith, which is that of Christ."<sup>[5]</sup> Raymond Lull did achieve the last of these three goals and strove mightily toward realizing the first two, in the process making himself the dominant figure in late-thirteenth-and early-fourteenth-century Christian missionizing.

In a sense, Raymond Lull was directly related to the circle that stands at the core of this study, a circle that emanated from the dominating presence of Friar Raymond of Penyafort. Lull embarked on a series of pilgrimages, at the end of which "he prepared to set out for Paris, for the sake of learning grammar there and acquiring other knowledge required for his tasks. But he was dissuaded from making this trip by the arguments and advice of his relatives and friends and most of all of Brother Ramon of the Dominicans, who had formerly compiled the *Decretals* for Pope Gregory IX, and those counsels made him return to his own city, that is, to Majorca."<sup>[6]</sup> J. N. Hillgarth, in his important study of Lull and Lullism, suggests that in this decision lay both positive and negative implications. On the negative side, Lull was deprived of contact with the most important contemporary teachers and libraries. The result, according to Hillgarth, is obvious. "The somewhat 'old-fashioned' nature of Lull's philosophy, which belongs, in many ways, more to the twelfth century than to his own age, must in large part be ascribed simply to his lack of contact, during his years of study, with any leading centre of Christian thought." Weighed against this negative is a powerful positive: "Majorca could give something unavailable at Paris, a thorough training in Arabic, together with an intimate knowledge of Islam as a living faith. These two things combined to give him a unique advantage over almost all the great scholastics who were his contemporaries, Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure, Duns Scotus."<sup>[7]</sup> Ultimately, Lull eschewed the rigorous scholasticism of Aquinas, which could not have provided the basis for popular missionizing, as well as the cleverly innovative thrusts of Friar Paul and Friar Raymond. He developed instead a popularly oriented (although highly complex) system of rational argumentation, intended to serve against all who shared common reasonable assumptions.

When we look into Lull's argumentation addressed to the Jews, we find no evidence of the innovative approach taken by Friar Paul or Friar Raymond. Generally, Lull treated the Jews along with the Muslims, although, clearly, the latter were the focus of his interests. Thus, for example, in *The Book of the Gentile and the Three Wise Men*, he

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involves a Jewish spokesman alongside a Christian and a Muslim. All three proceed from the same set of reasonable assumptions, provided at the outset by Lady Intelligence. While the principles that each strives to prove differ, the same kind of reasoning is adduced by each. It was obviously Lull's view (or least his hope) that a common line of reasoning might be achieved and that this common line of reasoning would lead ineluctably to acceptance of Christian truth.<sup>[8]</sup> Interestingly, in the one treatise that Lull devoted solely to the Jews, the primary line of argumentation is directly from the Scriptures, utilizing time-tested but shopworn exegetical and philosophical claims unlikely to have any significant impact on a thirteenth- or fourteenth-century Jewish audience.<sup>[9]</sup> Again, the overwhelming sense is that Lull was almost oblivious to the innovative thrusts that had come so recently out of the circle surrounding Raymond of Penyafort.

On reflection, it is not difficult to suggest some obvious reasons for the eclipse of the new missionizing argumentation. The new approach of Friar Paul and Friar Raymond suffered from two major technical deficiencies. First, it was not generalizable, that is to say, it could be used with the Jews only. The effort expended on this line of argumentation served no ancillary purpose with the Muslims or with any other group of nonbelievers. Given the limited interest in missionizing among the Jews and the extensive energies required for this new tack, the investment was heavy and questionable. Second, maintaining this line of argumentation necessitated an ongoing commitment of energies. Friar Raymond had created a remarkable handbook of rabbinic materials; however, a novice could clearly not utilize these materials effectively among the Jews. For the *Pugio Fidei* to be used properly, the missionizing preachers would have had to have some independent expertise in talmudic literature. Again, the issue is one of worthwhile investment.

When we take into consideration the additional and related facts that the new technique seemingly produced little in the way of conversion and that the Jews had fairly quickly adumbrated meaningful lines of response, the reluctance of the Church to make a further commitment to this costly new line of argumentation becomes readily understandable. As we have already suggested, the new argumentation was not dismissed by the Jews, despite the bantering tone of the narrative of Rabbi Moses ben Nahman. In fact, it was taken seriously by a number of important figures, and well-constructed rebuttals were fashioned. Several lines of response predominated. In the first place, the

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selective use of rabbinic materials by the Christian side probably constituted the most telling weakness in the new approach. To postulate arbitrarily that certain rabbinic materials (those that were useful to the Christian case) were truthful and meaningful and that others (those that contradicted the Christian case) were false and vicious hardly constituted a broad and responsible approach to the vast corpus of talmudic teachings. While there was a certain impressiveness about the imposing array of materials gathered by Friar Raymond and his associates, the essential arbitrariness of the approach could not be masked. Jews armed with the full range of rabbinic materials could pose difficult questions from texts that the Christian preachers might peremptorily dismiss. Christian dismissal of these texts, however, would ultimately have no effect on the Jews themselves. For the Jews, the notion of a vast corpus of materials and the resultant necessity of approaching these diverse materials from a reasoned exegetical perspective meant that the issues that Christian preachers might raise served merely as the goad to a reconsideration of texts and—at most—to occasional revision in the understanding of these texts. Since the challenge of thirteenth-century philosophy had already sensitized the Jews of western Christendom to the need for occasional reevaluation of classical texts, the new challenge from the Christian missionizers was not insuperable.

There was a second major line of Jewish response; this was to emphasize the inherent implausibility of the entire approach developed by Friar Paul. The notion that authoritative Jewish texts in fact bore Christological implications to which the Jews had over many centuries been blind strained credulity. Jews had, for a long time, been inured to the Christian claim that they failed to understand the Scriptures properly, and they had long before decisively rejected that claim. Now, for Christians to assert that the same thing was true with regard to their rabbinic heritage was likely ultimately to make as little or less impact among the Jews as the prior claims of Christological meaning in the Scriptures. The question that Nahmanides claims to have posed even before the actual discussion began in Barcelona remained a basic Jewish reaction. That is, it was not a debating tactic but rather a deeply felt conviction. That the rabbis might have held Christian beliefs without truly understanding the full implications of these beliefs was not credible to medieval Jews, and they were unlikely to be swayed by such suggestions. Thus, in a real sense, the very strength of the new approach was ultimately its weakness. The idea of attacking

the Jews from their own literature had a kind of perverse appeal, but, in the final analysis, an assault from some other neutral grounds (e.g., the rational-mystical grounds proposed by Raymond Lull) would be far likelier to succeed.

All these issues—the inherent difficulties in the new missionizing argumentation and the development of meaningful lines of Jewish response—serve to explain the shift away from this line of thinking that is so obvious in Raymond Lull, the dominant missionizing figure of the close of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth. They do not signal the demise of the new argumentation, however. It remained a powerful element in Christian missionizing all through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Let us cite briefly three indexes of the ongoing utilization of the new argumentation pioneered by Friar Paul and refined so elegantly by Friar Raymond.

During the third and fourth decades of the fourteenth century, Spanish Jewry was challenged by the most impressive of the medieval converts from Judaism to Christianity, Abner of Burgos, who became Alfonso of Valladolid. Baer, who was long fascinated with AbnerAlfonso and had planned to issue an edition of his works, said this of him: "The apostate Abner of Burgos exceeded in intrinsic merit and in the depth of his influence all the polemical opponents of the Jews during the Middle Ages."<sup>[10]</sup> Perhaps the most persuasive gauge of the significance of the man lies in the number of Jewish responses to Abner-Alfonso that have been preserved as part of medieval Jewish polemical literature.<sup>[11]</sup> Clearly deeply steeped in both traditional Jewish learning and in the philosophic writings of the period, he wrote voluminously in an effort to convince his former fellow Jews of the truth of the Christian faith that he had espoused. Utilization of the new technique of adducing rabbinic texts in support of Christian truth abounds in his writings. My own close analysis of a letter by Abner devoted to such rabbinic proofs of Christian truth suggested that he was highly original in his argumentation, in no sense relying on Friar Raymond's massive compendium.<sup>[12]</sup> In any case, his extensive utilization of the approach is beyond question.

It is interesting to note the extent to which his Jewish opponents perceived this use of rabbinic materials as central to Abner-Alfonso's teachings. Thus, for example, in introducing his book, '*Ezer ha-Emunah*, the fourteenth-century Rabbi Moses of Tordesillas notes the valuable twelfth-century manual composed by Jacob ben Reuben and suggests that it no longer suffices because of new turns that have

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taken place during the intervening two centuries. He notes in particular the writings of Abner-Alfonso and what he sees as their perversion of rabbinic teachings in the service of Christian truth.<sup>[13]</sup> This brief notice alerts us both to the importance of this particular convert and to the centrality of the new argumentation in his writings. What is more, after detailing a series of four encounters with former Jews, in which the books of the Bible and their alleged Christological implications were debated, Rabbi Moses goes on to indicate that subsequently he was forced into an additional debate by a student of Abner-Alfonso who was determined to adduce his teacher's proofs of Christian truth based on rabbinic texts. It is also striking that this student of AbnerAlfonso was not of Jewish extraction; like Friar Raymond, he was a born Christian who had amassed the skills to read and utilize rabbinic sources.<sup>[14]</sup> From Abner-Alfonso's own writings and the reactions of his Jewish respondents, it is clear that use of rabbinic materials, along the lines encountered throughout this study, was central to the missionizing enterprise of this crucial figure.

The same is true for the remarkable disputation engineered by yet another convert from Judaism to Christianity, the Tortosa disputation arranged and conducted by Joshua ha-Lorki-Gerónimo of Santa Fé.<sup>[15]</sup> This staged missionizing debate, obviously modeled after the Barcelona

disputation of 1263, came at a disastrous juncture in Jewish history—the aftermath of the catastrophic riots of 1391. A dispirited Jewry, depleted by loss of life and by conversion of thousands of its members, was subjected once more to an intense proselytizing experience that achieved (from the Christian perspective) major successes. Even a casual look at the substantial data that have survived indicates immediately the dependence of the Tortosa confrontation on the earlier missionizing thrust. The ground rules at Tortosa were the same as those at Barcelona; the issue on which the Christian protagonist focused was precisely the first agenda item at Barcelona; the evidence for the advent of the Messiah came from rabbinic literature, based heavily on the earlier efforts of Friar Paul and Friar Raymond.

Let us complete this cursory look at the influence of the new missionizing argumentation by citing a bizarre work, the *Mirror of the New Christians*.<sup>[16]</sup> This sixteenth-century treatise by Friar Francis Machado was aimed at dispelling the errors of Portuguese New Christians and buttressing their loyalty to Christianity and its teachings. The problem of such insincere New Christians stemmed from

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the peculiar circumstances of the conversion of Portuguese Jewry, circumstances that eventuated in the creation of a large number of Portuguese New Christians who were in fact deeply devoted to their Jewish heritage. In attempting to combat what he saw as the errors of these New Christians, Friar Francis of course utilized biblical citations and references to the standard authorities of the Church. What is striking, however, is his use of a somewhat different set of sources. According to Frank Talmage, the editor of this work,

Machado's most frequently cited source in the *Mirror* is not Christian but rabbinic literature. Machado liberally cites the Targumin, the early Aramaic translations of the Bible attributed to Onkelos (Pentateuch) and Jonathan ben Uzziel (Prophets) as well as the paraphrastic Jerusalem Targum (Targum Yerushalmi) to the Pentateuch. Many too are the various quotations from the Talmud as well as the various compilations of the midrash (rabbinic and medieval homiletico-exegetical literature).<sup>[17]</sup>

While Talmage suggests that it is not possible to identify the precise source or sources from which Machado drew his materials, the reliance upon the argumentation whose development has been analyzed here is unmistakable. The appearance of this argumentation in a sixteenth-century work designated for strengthening the faith of ostensible members of Christian society affords us an extreme and enlightening indication of the extent to which the new set of claims had been firmly fixed in the arsenal of Christian polemical literature from the thirteenth into the sixteenth century.

While continued Christian reliance on the argumentation developed by Friar Paul and refined by Friar Raymond is clearly evidenced in Christian sources, one more question remains to be posed—whether Jewish sources reflect an ongoing concern with this line of Christian attack. Here too the answer is positive. Inevitably, of course, Jews subjected directly to proselytizing assaults based on talmudic literature had to respond. Thus, the major Jewish respondents to the thrusts of Abner-Alfonso and those Jews summoned to represent their communities at Tortosa inevitably had to address themselves to the claims drawn from rabbinic sources. But beyond these immediate responses to the challenges imposed directly by Christian missionizers, the broad thrust was perceived as significant and occasioned long-range consideration and rebuttal. The surest indication of this ongoing concern with the new missionizing argumentation is

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Isaac Abravanel's comprehensive *Yeshu'ot Meshiho*<sup>[17]</sup>, a work devoted to broad consideration and rebuttal of the set of claims based on rabbinic texts.

*Yeshu'ot Meshiho* is the middle work of Abravanel's messianic trilogy.<sup>[18]</sup> In his introduction to the work, Abravanel indicates that after completing his *Ma'ayanei ha-Yeshu'a*, a work devoted to careful examination of the biblical sources that foretell Israel's redemption, he felt it necessary to examine rabbinic traditions to substantiate his own reading of the biblical evidence. He indicates a readiness to renounce his own findings if he finds them at odds with rabbinic understanding of the biblical data. At the same time, Abravanel announces quite explicitly another motivation for the writing of his *Yeshu'ot Meshiho*. He was alarmed at the loss of faith within the Jewish fold and at the attack on Jewish faith mounted by the Christian world in general and by former Jews in particular. Given the extensive utilization—for Abravanel, perversion—of rabbinic sources by these Christian missionizers, he felt it incumbent on himself to scrupulously examine rabbinic teachings so as to refute these harmful Christian thrusts. To be sure, Abravanel indicates that he will not reduce his work to the low level of polemics: he claims that his Jewish predecessors who had rebutted the thrusts of the new missionizing argumentation had often sacrificed truth to the exigencies of polemical confrontation. He claims he will take the high road of objective search for the true meaning of the rabbinic legacy.<sup>[19]</sup> The result is, in fact, a sophisticated treatment of the corpus of rabbinic messianic teachings. For our purposes, Abravanel's extensive effort is useful evidence of the extent to which the new argumentation had deeply penetrated the Jewish communities of the late fifteenth century and had come to be perceived as a significant threat to Jewish belief. As yet another index of the relationship of Abravanel's opus to the mid-thirteenth-century developments analyzed here, let me cite the four chapter headings around which Abravanel organizes his materials: (1) explication of the aggadot that seem to suggest that the Messiah has already come or will not come; (2) explication of that which is indicated in their [rabbis'] teachings that the Messiah has already been born and where he resides; (3) explication of rabbinic dicta that seem to suggest that the kingly Messiah will be like one of the heavenly host; and (4) explication of the aggadot that seem to suggest that, with the coming of the Messiah, the Torah of Moses will be annulled in its totality or in part.<sup>[20]</sup> This agenda strikes a familiar chord. Both the methodology and the sub-

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stantive issues with which Isaac Abravanel was so deeply concerned reflect clearly the imprint of the new argumentation spawned by the intense proselytizing efforts of the mid-thirteenth century.

Thus, on every level, the new missionizing thrusts that we have studied maintained themselves for a number of centuries. The Church continued to train personnel devoted to the enterprise; it continued to successfully pressure the secular authorities to force their Jews to attend missionizing sermons and debates; its missionizing personnel continued to utilize the innovative argumentation that had been developed during the middle decades of the thirteenth century. The impact of these developments was substantial. To be sure, during the late thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, European Jewry was beset with a host of problems. The enhanced missionizing efforts to which these Jewish communities were subjected constituted but one of the challenges with which they had to contend. This challenge was, however, far from negligible.

## Implications

Having examined the immediate and long-term impact of the new missionizing campaign, we should conclude by attending to some of the important ancillary meanings of this innovative effort. What are some of the implications of this unprecedented proselytizing program?

In the first place, the innovative assault on the medieval Jews serves to reinforce the generally accepted picture of the middle decades of the thirteenth century. The concerted effort reveals the depths of the Christian commitment to winning over the nonbelieving world, the sure sense of intellectual superiority that characterized the period, and the latent insecurities that stimulated the massive effort to find new lines of religious argumentation. The preaching campaign among the Jews shows us yet another facet of the central thrusts of this crucial epoch. Because we can trace some of this campaign in detail, we have an unusually rich portrait of the intensive effort to win over new adherents through a not altogether consistent combination of coercion and intellection, again—as argued convincingly by Kedar—so fully characteristic of the period.<sup>[21]</sup>

Similarly, the new missionizing effort and the Jewish responses reflect accurately the material and spiritual state of mid-thirteenth-century Jewry in western Christendom. These Jews were still self-

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confident and vigorous in their defense of Jewish beliefs. This confidence and vigor is a reflection of the continued material strength of these Jewish communities. The serious erosion of the Jewish situation was, at this point, under way but had not yet developed to the point of undermining Jewish resources and will. Moreover, Jewish intellectual leadership of this period was involved in battles on a number of fronts, most strikingly, the need to protect traditional Jewish beliefs against the assault of the philosophers. As Marc Saperstein has shown fully for the hitherto-unknown Issac ben Yedaiah, many of the creative Jewish figures of this epoch were fully committed to reexamining precisely the literature utilized by Friar Paul and Friar Raymond.<sup>[22]</sup> While the focus of these efforts was to show that rabbinic teachings were not undermined by the pronouncements of the philosophers, it was only a small step to conduct a parallel investigation of the same kinds of sources in an effort to prove that they could in no way be utilized in the service of Christian truth. During the middle decades of the thirteenth century, the Jews of western Christendom were fully equipped to rebuff the new missionizing challenge.

It has recently been suggested that the innovative missionizing campaign of the mid-thirteenth century had an ominous implication, that it in fact formed an important component in a new view of Judaism and the Jews, a view that negated the traditional Jewish right to live within Christian society.<sup>[23]</sup> In his important study, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism*, Jeremy Cohen analyzes a number of developments that he believes reflect the emergence of this new and deleterious view of Judaism and the Jews.<sup>[24]</sup> Both the Barcelona confrontation and the *Pugio Fidei* figure prominently in Cohen's case for a new ecclesiastical ideology concerning both. Let us examine carefully his use of the material related to the missionizing campaign.

Cohen builds an elaborate scheme with regard to the Barcelona confrontation. He begins by noting the four-part agenda advanced by Friar Paul, claiming that the first and last of these four items were crucial. More precisely, according to Cohen, the last item—that Jewish law was null and void—was the key to Christian success, with the first item—that the Messiah had already come—serving as the foundation for this last, decisive assertion. In Cohen's words:

If Pablo did in fact hope to convert the Jews through his missionary and forensic efforts, proving this final proposition constituted the key to his success. The Jews had to be shown that their religion had become obso-

lete. For even though a Christian polemicist could point to messianic allusions in biblical and rabbinic sources, he still had to define the significance and ramifications of these allusions for the Jews of his day—namely, that bespeaking the truth of Christianity, they invalidated contemporary Jewish observance—before the Jews would accept conversion.<sup>[25]</sup>

This assumption—that the fourth item on the agenda was the truly crucial one—leads Cohen to argue that this last issue must have been raised, despite the ostensible lack of reference to it in both the Latin and Hebrew records. "One finds it hard to believe that a skilled debater like Pablo would have neglected to mention this most crucial issue throughout the four days of discussion. The only alternative is to show that the friar did indeed try to demonstrate the invalidity of current Jewish observance but that he did so subtly, so as to allow for no direct refutation from Nahmanides but to achieve the desired effect nonetheless."<sup>[26]</sup> Cohen claims that the core of the confrontation was aimed at forcing Nahmanides to deny authoritative texts, thereby proving to all the distance between genuine Judaism and the contemporary deviation from it.

By placing Nahmanides in the position of having to deny classical rabbinic texts which supposedly proclaimed the advent of the messiah, those texts "authoritative among the Jews," Pablo endeavored to emphasize that Nahmanides and contemporary Jewry had broken with the faith of their ancient ancestors. . . . True Judaism would have dictated an acceptance of Jesus; the current Judaism of Nahmanides—the observance of Mosaic and rabbinic law—could thus not be orthodox. Simply by forcing Nahmanides to respond to his arguments—that is, to reject the textual evidence—for the first three propositions of the agenda, Pablo hoped cleverly to prove the fourth and most important: continued practice of the Judaism of rabbinic law now constituted doctrinal error for the most pious of Jews!<sup>[27]</sup>

Let us examine closely the elements in Cohen's case. First, the argument that the fourth item was the crucial one is untenable. Cohen suggests that proving the advent of the Messiah alone would not have sufficed—that contemporary Jewish practice had to be proved superfluous or, better, misguided. He proposes to show this from Nahmanides' opening statement, which was discussed earlier. Cohen claims that, in his opening statement, the rabbi charged the friar with the task of proving the nullity of Jewish practice. To cite Nahmanides' formulation:

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If these sages believed in the messianic role of Jesus, that he was truly the Messiah and that his faith and religion were true, and if they wrote these things from which Friar Paul intends to prove this, then how did they remain in the Jewish faith and in their former tradition? For they were surely Jews, remained in the Jewish faith, and died Jews.<sup>[28]</sup>

Cohen understands Nahmanides to be saying, "If the rabbis of the Talmud knew the Messiah had come and still practiced Judaism, how did Pablo's fourth proposition follow from his first? Why should medieval Jews forsake their religious observances and convert to Christianity?"<sup>[29]</sup> This, however, is clearly not what Nahmanides was saying. In fact, he stated the opposite. He did not grant that the rabbis might have believed in the advent of the Messiah and still remained Jews. Instead, he pointed to the unthinkable nature of that combination, arguing that there is no way that the rabbis could have believed that Jesus had been the promised Messiah and still remained Jews. Had the rabbis believed in Jesus as the Messiah, they would have had to abandon Judaism. The fact that they did not abandon Judaism is thus clear proof that they did not believe in Jesus as the Messiah. Rather than showing the centrality of the last item on the agenda, this passage shows the independence of the first item of the agenda (and, indeed, the second and the third items as well). Had Friar Paul been able to prove decisively that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, by convincing Jews that the Messiah had already come, or that the Messiah was intended to be both divine and human, or that the Messiah was fated to suffer and die, he would have thereby won the day. In a real sense, the fourth item was not necessary. If the case for Jesus as Messiah had been made convincingly, then the Jews should have left the fold. The fourth item was far from crucial; it was merely a further effort to discomfort the Jews, to sow seeds of doubt wherever possible.

If the fourth item on the agenda was not the crucial item, the question posed by Cohen concerning how the entire confrontation could pass without engaging the Jews on this crucial issue falls by the wayside as well. It is thus no longer necessary to seek the devious and subtle means by which this issue was allegedly joined, as Cohen does. In fact, Cohen's presentation of this approach fails as well. As we have seen, he argues that by forcing Nahmanides into the position of denying authoritative texts, Friar Paul succeeded in indicating a disparity between the Judaism of his epoch and classical Judaism. There are a number of problems with this argument. First, we have seen that de-

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nial of rabbinic texts was not the only tactic employed by Rabbi Moses ben Nahman. Second, Rabbi Moses denied only a certain class of rabbinic texts (and that only under specific circumstances, as shown above); he certainly never denied biblical or halachic texts. Forcing Rabbi Moses to reject certain aggadic statements does not constitute proof that "Nahmanides and contemporary Jewry had broken with the faith of their ancient ancestors." Most important, the conclusion that Cohen reaches does not square with the agenda item as spelled out in the sources. To force the rabbi to deny Jewish *auctoritates* is hardly the same thing as proving that "the laws and ceremonials ceased and should have ceased after the advent of the said Messiah."<sup>[30]</sup> In constructing his case, Cohen has distorted the meaning of the Barcelona agenda. Our analysis of Barcelona and the *Pugio Fidei*, which took cognizance of both the Christian thrusts and the Jewish counterthrusts, has indicated straightforwardly what was intended in the last agenda item: Friar Paul intended to show that rabbinic texts themselves spoke of annulment of the law with the advent of the Messiah. Basing his final argument on his (hopefully) successful first argument, he intended to prove to the Jews—as Friar Raymond subsequently tried to do—that Jewish law was now abrogated because of the advent of the Messiah. Again, as was true throughout this missionizing campaign, there is really nothing new in the substance of the claim; what is new is the means proposed for proving this age-old Christian contention.

Thus, on close inspection, Cohen's case based on the Barcelona confrontation dissolves. The fourth item on the agenda was in no sense the crucial item; it is fully plausible that this issue was never raised at Barcelona. Friar Paul's intention was not to prove that present-day Judaism was a deviation from classical Judaism; his last goal was to prove the age-old Christian contention that Jewish law had been abrogated by the coming of the Messiah but to do so on the basis of rabbinic texts. There is, therefore, no evidence in the Barcelona confrontation of a new ideological view of Judaism and the Jews.

Cohen attempts to buttress his case for a new view of contemporary Judaism and Jews through an examination of Friar Raymond's *Pugio Fidei* as well. Once again, the effort is unsuccessful. After reviewing aspects of the preaching of Friar Raymond and the broad contents of the *Pugio*, Cohen proceeds to his arguments for a new

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view of Jewish history, present-day Judaism, and the Jews. According to Cohen, Martini distinguishes three different genera of expressions of Jewish belief. First, he speaks of the law and prophecies of the Old Testament, which along with their correct interpretations would, albeit prefiguratively, establish the truth of Christianity. These interpretations or *traditiones* were preserved by the Jews of the Bible as part of their oral tradition, which eventually came to be recorded by the rabbis of the Talmud. Such correct interpretations of Scripture must be extracted from rabbinic literature "like pearls out of a very great dungheap." Second, in contradistinction to these select few *traditiones*, the vast majority of talmudic teachings are described as the aforementioned dungheap, the head of a dragon or toad, or the venomous sting of the bee. This body of literature, replete with "absurdities," propagates the false beliefs "regarding the messiah and

so many other matters which the Jews have believed from the time of Christ." Third, Martini identifies his present enemy, "the perfidy of the modern Jews," which expresses itself as both "impudence" and "evil." It is against this third brand of Judaism that he intends to direct the Christological *traditiones* of the first.<sup>[31]</sup>

Cohen's description of the first two categories is excellent. It is a concise and accurate summation of Friar Raymond's introductory statement of the two sets of traditions reflected in talmudic literature. Cohen's third category, however, does not exist. To put the matter a bit more sharply, the purported third set of beliefs is simply the sum total of the first two, with the scales heavily weighted in favor of the second.

Cohen proceeds to argue that, for Friar Raymond, the three sets of expressions of Jewish belief correspond to three groups in Jewish history. (1) "The first group consisted of the Hebrews of the Old Testament."<sup>[32]</sup> (2) The second group consisted of "the Jews of the Talmud, who lived during and after the life of Jesus."<sup>[33]</sup> (3) "The third group of Jews in history, the *Iudei moderni* of Martini's own day, maintained the perverse beliefs of the rabbis who preceded them, inheriting and persisting in all the vices and insanities of talmudic Judaism."<sup>[34]</sup> Once again, the tripartite scheme means nothing. There are really only two groups for Friar Raymond (and all mainstream Christian theologians): pre-Christian Jews and post-Christian Jews.

More significant than the futility of this tripartite scheme is Cohen's failure to show any significant innovation in Friar Raymond's view of rabbinic Judaism. While he quotes copiously and well the friar's harsh denunciations of the Talmud and the rabbis, at no point

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does Cohen show us how this view deviates from prior conceptions of Judaism and the Jews. That Friar Raymond's formulation was unusually vituperative can be readily agreed; that it was in any way theologically innovative is not demonstrated. For, after all, prior Christian views of the Jews are hardly laudatory with regard to Jewish law and lore. The traditional assumption was that the Jews of Jesus' lifetime had misread their Scriptures and had, as a result, failed to acknowledge Jesus as the promised Messiah. Rabbinic literature—poorly known, to be sure—was assumed to be the continuation of Jewish misunderstanding of the covenant. Once more, Friar Raymond is introducing no new notion here. Rather, as stressed repeatedly throughout this study, his contribution lay in a knowledge of rabbinic literature far richer than that generally available and in creative utilization of that knowledge for Christian missionizing purposes. Friar Raymond, like Friar Paul, made no break with prior conceptions of Judaism and the Jews; they both argued that Judaism and the Jews had not been understood in sufficient detail. More specifically, the extent of harmful and intolerable Jewish teaching had not, according to the mid-thirteenth-century Dominicans, been properly assessed, and the potentially useful talmudic exegesis and dicta had not been sufficiently exploited.

Let me conclude these comments on Cohen's analysis by drawing together the two seemingly divergent tendencies just now noted—condemnation of the Talmud and exploitation of the Talmud—in a fashion different from that proposed by Cohen. At the end of his discussion of Friar Raymond, Cohen contends that his understanding of Friar Paul and Friar Raymond facilitates the solution of a problem that has long intrigued historians of this period: how could the Church in general and the friars in particular, who had begun to condemn the Talmud to the stake in the 1240s, suddenly begin, only a few decades later, to argue from the Talmud against the Jews?<sup>[35]</sup>

Cohen's solution to this seemingly vexing problem is to argue that both approaches reflect the underlying new position with regard to Judaism and the Jews. My analysis has led in a different direction. I propose that neither campaign reflects a new understanding of Judaism and the Jews. Rather, to use the terminology of Friar Raymond, one might legitimately distinguish three types of rabbinic teaching: incorrect but innocuous; incorrect and intolerable; correct (i.e., Chris-

tological). The first were and remained lamentable but tolerable; the second would have always been unacceptable; the third should have always been exploited. The innovation of the mid-thirteenth century lay not in adumbrating new positions but in gleaning newly detailed information with regard to the materials in the second and third categories. On the basis of the old theory and the new information, the Dominicans set out to do what had to be done—eliminate harmful teachings and exploit the correct and useful ones.

Thus, it seems to me that the proofs adduced for the alleged new ideological view of the Jews from the missionizing campaign, and indeed from the assault on the Talmud as well, do not sustain the argument. In fact, the deleterious activities of the mendicants can be readily understood without recourse to a new ideological stance with regard to Judaism and the Jews. The prior Augustinian tradition presented and analyzed by Cohen was somewhat more flexible than he allows. All the negative activities of the friars (negative from the Jewish perspective) can be readily understood within the context of this earlier ecclesiastical view. For the prior Augustinian stance in no sense afforded the Jews carte blanche with regard to religious and social behaviors. The clear understanding always was that the Jews must behave in ways that would entail no harm to the Christian society that had extended hospitality to them. To cite the most famous formulation of this theory, "Just as the Jews ought not enjoy license to presume to do in their synagogues more than permitted by law, so too in those [privileges] conceded to them they should not suffer curtailment."<sup>[38]</sup> What this traditional formulation does is to emphasize equally Jewish rights and responsibilities. The major responsibility was always understood as the duty to live in a manner that would entail no harm to the Christian majority. Thus, as the mendicant orders, charged with the core task of ensuring the doctrinal purity of Christian society, began to function, it was almost inevitable that Jewish teachings perceived as harmful to the Christian faith and to Christian society would come under the scrutiny of these orders. The mendicant assault on the Talmud requires for its understanding no appeal to a new ideological stance on the part of the Church. The old ideology made ample provision for an attack on any teachings that could be construed as a breach of conduct on the part of the Jewish minority.

There was a second elastic clause in the traditional view of the Jewish place in Christian society. That clause involved the issue of conversion of the Jews. While forcible conversion was eschewed (indeed, Co-

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hen suggests no alteration of this traditional stance in the purported new view) and total conversion of the Jews was pushed off to the time of the Second Coming (in fact, it was to serve as one of the signs of the dawning of the age of full redemption), Christian responsibility to convert individual Jews through rational persuasion and generous behavior was never denied or abandoned in theory. To be sure, there was little serious pre-thirteenth-century effort to carry out this mandate, as we have seen. As a more mature, self-confident, and aggressive Christian society emerged in thirteenth-century western Christendom and as that society began to reach out and address its message more and more intensely to its own membership and to its major monotheistic rival, the world of Islam, it is not at all surprising that part of this new energy should be directed at the older monotheistic sister community, the Jews. To the extent that the mendicant orders bore primary responsibility for the preaching effort in general, it was inevitable that they should shoulder the burden of missionizing among the Jews specifically. Again, no new theory is called for; the old Augustinian view made ample provision for such proselytizing efforts.

In both these areas—scrutiny of Jewish self-expression and missionizing efforts among the Jews—there is no need to posit a new theory. The old theory fully justified and indeed required such activities. As noted, the traditional theory always had to be seen against a particular societal backdrop. An earlier, less mature, and less aggressive age allowed the Jews of western Christendom more latitude in selfexpression and confronted them with far fewer conversionary efforts. The new spiritual ambience of the mid-thirteenth century produced a new set of pressures, fully comprehensible within the old theoretical framework but actualized by the new circumstances of European civilization. The mendicants, in their general activities and in their specifically anti-Jewish programs, reflected this newly aggressive ambience and, at the same time, reinforced it considerably.

While I have disputed Cohen's assertion of a new theological view regarding Judaism and the Jews implicit in the missionizing campaign that we have examined, I agree with his sense of deteriorating Jewish circumstances and of an ecclesiastical—or more narrowly mendicant—role in this deterioration.<sup>[32]</sup> In a number of ways, the missionizing campaign certainly contributed to the increasingly negative perception of the Jews that developed in thirteenth-century western Christendom.

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Both Reuven Bonfils and Cohen have focused on the viciously negative portrayal of Jews and Judaism in the *Pugio Fidei*, the former in an independent study of the book and the latter as part of his broad reassessment of the thirteenth-century Church and its stance toward the Jews.<sup>[33]</sup> In the course of our examination of the missionizing argumentation presented by Friar Raymond, we too have had ample opportunity to note in passing some of the harshness of Friar Raymond's formulations. What precisely is the meaning of this harshness? Unfortunately, we possess little else from the pen of Friar Raymond than his proselytizing manuals. Evidence from other figures from the period suggests that the same individual could on different occasions make statements that were remarkably harsh or strikingly moderate. The most obvious example is the late-thirteenth-century Raymond Lull. Lull has left a vast corpus of writings, and, as a result, it is possible to note the use of a variety of tones for different circumstances. In his novel *Felix*, Lull has a harsh passage on the Jews. The passage speaks of a hermit who went all through the city so that he could feel joyful whenever he saw God was loved and known, and so that for any contrary thing he could weep and beg God's mercy in order that God ordain that he be loved and known. One day it came to pass that this hermit entered the synagogue of the Jews, where he heard them cursing Jesus Christ, without giving the hermit a thought, since they assumed he was a Jew. This holy man felt great displeasure at the thought that the Christian king allowed people to remain in his city who were against the king's religion and dishonored that Lord who was the king's Lord.<sup>[34]</sup>

Balanced against this harsh depiction is his *Book of the Gentile and the Three Wise Men*, in which the three sages—a Jew, a Christian, and a Muslim—treat each other with unusual respect. At the end of the lengthy discussion, in which each sage presents the case for the truth of his faith, the three leave the gentile prior to the announcement of his choice of religion, so that they might continue unobstructed in their own discussions of truth and error. This is a remarkable ending, since, in general, the tendency is for the author of such dialogues to award the palm of victory to the spokesman for his faith.<sup>[40]</sup> What I suggest, then, is that we must examine carefully the context and implications of Friar Raymond's harshness.

As we have already noted, the *Pugio Fidei* was composed as a lengthy and technical manual for missionizers; it was certainly not intended directly for the Jews or for a popular Christian audience either.

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What, then, would be the point of the recurrent vituperation that characterizes the book? The simplest answer would be that these were the genuine views of Friar Raymond himself, which he wished to communicate to his readers. While that is a possibility, it is far from a certainty. Are there any conceivable utilitarian purposes to this vituperation? In fact, there are a few. One is to discourage any Christian reader from being attracted to the Jewish materials that Friar Raymond had gathered. Friar Raymond's broad sense is that there are true and false, beneficial and vicious rabbinic teachings. The true and beneficial correspond to Christian truth; the false and vicious are those doctrines that dissent from Christian truth. One of the values of the recurrent vituperation is to forcefully remind the potential Christian reader-missionizer that he is not to be overly drawn to the positive teachings and that he is to recollect constantly the larger context of error in which the positive teachings are, according to Friar Raymond, embedded. Moreover, as we have emphasized throughout this study, effective missionizing always involved both a positive and a negative thrust—proving the truth of one's own faith and the error of the opposing system. The negative sallies against Judaism may also have been intended to remind the missionizer of the purported absurdity of the Jewish position and the need to drive home to the Jewish audience precisely that absurdity. Thus, the negativism may be more than the author's simple pique with the Jews; it may in fact be traceable to the very purpose of the work as a missionizing manual. If the work had been intended directly for Jewish eyes, then the harshness might well have been counterproductive. Since it was intended essentially for potential Christian proselytizers, the harshness did have a number of roles to play.

The missionizing context of Friar Raymond's harsh statements must be constantly borne in mind. It seems unwise to extrapolate from the missionizing context a general position vis-à-vis the Jews. The missionizing context is, after all, inherently aggressive. While the traditional Christian stance toward the Jews asserts that they are in error but that their errors can be—and, in fact, should be—temporarily tolerated, the missionizing stance, while not formally repudiating that toleration, does emphasize the errors rather than the toleration. Every effort to missionize among the medieval Jews bent the system in the direction of an emphasis on error rather than toleration, and the massive campaign of the mid-thirteenth century is no exception. In making the case for the conversion of the Jews, the organizers and spokesmen of this campaign necessarily came down hard-

est on the shortcomings of the Jews and the need to highlight these shortcomings to the Jewish audience. In the process, there was an inevitable emphasis on this element in the complex mix that constituted ecclesiastical policy with regard to the Jews. This emphasis should not be overstated. It need not be taken to signal a thoroughly new policy on Judaism; it might better be seen as a time-honored thrust that inevitably skewed the fragile balance in Church stance toward the aggressively negative. In this regard, I again find myself in disagreement with Cohen's broad reading of the missionizing campaign as the sign of a new Church position that in effect overturned the prior tradition of toleration. I suggest, rather, that this missionizing campaign merely reflects an inherent instability in the traditional and fragile Church position with regard to the Jews. At the moment that the missionizing endeavor was set into motion, the tenuous combination that characterized the Church's view of Judaism and the Jews—the ambiguous combination of toleration and repudiation—was destabilized in the direction of repudiation. This is not a new doctrine; it is realization of some of the negative potential inherent in the old and traditional and complex Church doctrine with respect to Judaism and the Jews; its implications are seriously harmful to the Jews.

There is more. Every serious effort to proselytize among the Jews had as a concomitant the potential for arousing significant ancillary hostility against the Jews. Such serious efforts, after all, always began with a sense of the obvious truth in Christian teaching (underlying insecurity

notwithstanding). Given the fact that substantial resources were marshaled in order to bring this perceived Christian truth to the Jewish masses and that these efforts achieved little success, the result had to be a sense of disappointment and frustration and, not surprisingly, a deepened sense of what Christians often perceived as the fundamental irrationality of the Jews. To put matters in the context of this study, after long resisting Christian truth claims based on the Scriptures, on rational considerations, and on empirical evidence, the Jews were confronted with massive argumentation from their own postbiblical literature. The missionizers' sense was that this new line of argumentation could hardly fail to break through Jewish resistance. When, in fact, it did fail, the inevitable by-product was a hardening of Christian attitudes toward the Jews. These people, so long viewed as recalcitrant, revealed themselves once more—to Christian eyes—as incapable of seeing the obvious truth.

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In this sense, of course, every serious missionizing effort was ultimately bad news for medieval Jewry. One of two things had to eventuate: either Jews would convert in some numbers or Christians would be reinforced in their negative views of the Jews. The most massive effort at winning over Jews ever undertaken had inevitably to produce a significant level of anger and frustration with its failure. For the Jews, then, the essential problem lay not in a specifically anti-Jewish thrust to the new missionizing but rather in the aggressive environment that turned Christian sensitivities to the missionizing endeavor. Once this missionizing effort was set into motion and achieved only minimal results, inevitably the image of the Jews had to suffer further in the eyes of those who had committed themselves to the campaign. In this sense, then, the proselytizing of the mid-thirteenth century had deleterious results for the Jewish image in western Christendom. Old stereotypes of Jewish blindness and obtuseness were inevitably reinforced. This occurred not out of a specifically anti-Jewish hue to the missionizing or out of an initially negative disposition on the part of the missionizers. The culprit was ultimately the new environment that spawned conversionist ardor. Just as the aggressive thrust of eleventh- and twelfth-century crusading almost ineluctably brought in its wake harmful implications for European Jewry, so too the not unrelated inclination to heightened missionizing that made itself manifest during the thirteenth century bore similarly baneful implications. An already negative European image of the Jews was deepened; in yet one more way, the Jews were perceived as incapable of comprehending and assimilating obvious truths.

Neither the initial missionizing campaign nor the ancillary negative stereotyping constituted the most serious impingement on Jewish life during the middle decades of the thirteenth century. In a variety of ways—economic, political, and social—the circumstances of the Jewish communities of western Christendom deteriorated badly during these years.<sup>[41]</sup> While not the harshest blow suffered at this juncture, the proselytizing effort and its inevitable concomitants further exacerbated an already difficult situation. To be sure, while they are only two of many destructive developments that characterize this unstable epoch, they are factors of considerable significance in the obvious decline of western Christendom's Jewries during the middle years of the thirteenth century.

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# Notes

## Introduction

1. Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches toward the Muslims* (Princeton, 1984). [\[BACK\]](#)
2. Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca, 1982). [\[BACK\]](#)
3. Anthony Bonner (ed. and trans.), *Selected Works of Ramon Llull* (2 vols.; Princeton, 1985), I, 94-95. [\[BACK\]](#)

## 1— The Pre-Thirteenth-Century Legacy

1. There is no overall study of the history of Christian missionizing among the Jews. The best overview of such Christian missionizing in the Middle Ages is Peter Browe, *Die Judenmission im Mittelalter und die Päpste* (Rome, 1942). Also valuable are Bernhard Blumenkranz, *Juifs et chrétiens dans le monde occidentale, 430-1096* (Paris, 1956), 67-158, and Salo Wittmayer Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* (2d ed.; 18 vols.; New York, 1952-1983), IX, 71-94. [\[BACK\]](#)
2. There are many useful introductions to the difficulties of reconstructing the earliest phases of Christian history and to the limited conclusions that can be reached. See, inter alia, the recent works of Howard Clark Kee, *Jesus in History: An Approach to the Study of the Gospels* (New York, 1970) and *Understanding the New Testament* (4th ed.; Cliffside Park, 1983). [\[BACK\]](#)
3. Acts 10:1-11:18. [\[BACK\]](#)
4. Again, there is a vast literature on Paul. On Paul and the Jews, see the recent publications by E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia, 1983), and John Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism* (New York, 1983), 193-264. [\[BACK\]](#)
5. Romans 11:11-12. [\[BACK\]](#)
6. See the useful summary provided in W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia, 1984), and in Ramsey MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire* (New Haven, 1984). [break](#) [\[BACK\]](#)
7. See Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel*, trans. H. McKeating (Oxford, 1986), 306-338. Note, especially, Robert L. Wilcken's recent and intensive study of John Chrysostom, in which he argues that internal judaizing was Chrysostom's prime concern, *John Chrysostom and the Jews* (Berkeley, 1984). To be sure, Simon sees John Chrysostom differently, as deeply anti-Jewish—see *Verus Israel*, 217-222. [\[BACK\]](#)
8. See e.g., Robert L. Wilcken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (New Haven, 1984), 94-163. [\[BACK\]](#)
9. See the classic work of Jean Juster, *Les juifs dans l'empire romain* (2 vols.; Paris, 1914). See also Simon, *Verus Israel*, and Baron, *A Social and Religious History*, II, 172-214. [\[BACK\]](#)
10. For an overview of emergent Jewish status in the christianized Roman Empire, see James Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue* (London, 1934), 151-269. On the crucial role of Augustine in the development of a normative view concerning the Jews, see Bernhard Blumenkranz, *Die Judenpredigt Augustins* (Basle, 1946), and, idem, "Augustin et les juifs, Augustin et le judaïsme," *Recherches augustiniennes*, I (1958): 225-241, reprinted in, idem, *Juifs et chrétiens: patristique et moyen âge*. [\[BACK\]](#)
11. See Robert Chazan, "1007-1012: Initial Crisis for Northern-European Jewry," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, XXXVIII-XXXIX (1970-1971): 101-117. [\[BACK\]](#)
12. See, idem, *European Jewry and the First Crusade* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1987), which stresses the doctrinal roots of the First Crusade assaults and the subsequent efforts on the part of the ecclesiastical hierarchy to control unwarranted interpretations of Church teaching with regard to the Jews. [\[BACK\]](#)
13. See, especially, the important study by David Berger, "Mission to the Jews and Jewish-Christian Contacts in the Polemical Literature of the High Middle Ages," *American Historical Review* XCI (1986): 576-591. [\[BACK\]](#)
14. Note again Blumenkranz's important studies of Augustine's views on the Jews. At the same time, general biographies of Augustine do not accord any centrality to this concern with the Jews, as seems proper. See, e.g., Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967). [\[BACK\]](#)
15. Once more, there is no overall survey of Christian anti-Jewish polemical literature. Still highly useful is the collection of descriptions by A. Lukyn Williams, *Adversus Judaeos* (Cambridge, 1935). See, more recently, Heinz Schreckenberg, *Die christlichen Adversus-Judeos-Texte und ihr literarisches und historisches Umfeld* (1.-11. Jh.) (Frankfurt, 1982). For a more synthetic treatment, see Baron, *A Social and Religious History*, IX, 97-134, and Daniel J. Lasker, *Jewish Philosophical Polemics against Christianity in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1977), 1-11. Note, also, the valuable study by Amos Funkenstein, "Changes in the Patterns of Christian Anti-hard Jewish Polemics in the Twelfth Century" (Hebrew), *Zion* \* XXXIV (1968): 124-144. [\[BACK\]](#)
16. Lasker has studied the philosophic issues in medieval Christian-Jewish polemics, at least from the Jewish perspective, in his *Jewish Philosophical Polemics*. For the emergence of philosophic issues in twelfth-century Christian polemics, see Funkenstein, "Changes in the Patterns of Christian Anti-Jewish Polemics." [\[BACK\]](#)
17. Note, e.g., the appearance of this issue in Peter Abelard's *Dialogue of a Philosopher with a Jew and a Christian*. See Peter Abelard, *Dialogus inter Philosophum, Iudeum et Christianum*, ed. Rudolf Thomas (Stuttgart, 1970), 51. An English

- translation is available in Peter Abelard, *A Dialogue of a Philosopher with a Jew and a Christian*, trans. Pierre J. Payer (Toronto, 1979), 33. [\[BACK\]](#)
18. For an overview, see Baron, *A Social and Religious History*, IX, 121-132. [\[BACK\]](#)
  19. The fullest study of this Jewry remains that of Juster, *Les juifs dans l'empire romain*. [\[BACK\]](#)
  20. See the studies of Joshua Starr, *The Jews in the Byzantine Empire, 641-1204* (Athens, 1939), and *Romania: The Jewries of the Levant after the Fourth Crusade* (Paris, 1949). See the two more recent accounts by Zvi Ankori, *Yahadut ve-Yavnut Nozrit \* : Mifgash ve-'Imut be-Meruzat \* ha-Dorot* (Tel-Aviv, 1984), and Steven B. Bowman, *The Jews of Byzantium, 1204-1453* (University, Ala., 1985). [\[BACK\]](#)
  21. Note the important study by Avraham Grossman, "The Jewish-Christian Polemic and Jewish Bible Exegesis in Twelfth-Century France" (Hebrew), *Zion* LI (1986): 29-60, and the literature cited there, p. 29, n. 1. [\[BACK\]](#)
  22. This important text was carefully edited by the late Judah Rosenthal—see Jacob ben Reuven, *Milhamot \* ha-Shem*, ed. Judah Rosenthal (Jerusalem, 1963). Rosenthal's bibliographic work and his editions of major polemical texts represent signal contributions to the study of medieval Jewish polemics. For Jacob ben Reuben's knowledge of Christian polemical materials, see David Berger, "Gilbert Crispin, Alan of Lille, and Jacob ben Reuben," *Speculum* XLIX (1974): 34-47. [\[BACK\]](#)
  23. See Jacob ben Reuben, *Milhamot ha-Shem*, ed. Rosenthal, pp. 7-22. The twelfth-century *Sefer ha-Berit*, attributed to Rabbi Joseph Kimhi, appears in the collection *Milhemet \* Hovav \** (Constantinople, 1710), 18 b- 38 a; it was republished by Frank Talmage, *Sefer ha-Berit* (Jerusalem, 1974), 21-68. Talmage has also provided an English translation of this important text—Joseph Kimhi, *The Book of the Covenant* (Toronto, 1972). [\[BACK\]](#)
  24. See David Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate in the High Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 1979), 269-271. See also Joseph Kimhi, *Sefer ha-Berit*, ed. Talmage, pp. 25-28. [\[BACK\]](#)
  25. See the interesting text discussed in Robert Chazan, "A Medieval Hebrew Polemical Mélange," *Hebrew Union College Annual* LI (1980): 101-102. break [\[BACK\]](#)
  26. See, inter alia, Charles Homer Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1927); R. W. Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages* (London, 1953); idem, *Medieval Humanism and Other Studies* (Oxford, 1970); M. D. Chenu, *Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century*, ed. and trans. Jerome Taylor and Lester K. Little (Chicago, 1968); Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable (eds.), *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982). [\[BACK\]](#)
  27. Note the role assigned to the Jews by Southern in his *Medieval Humanism*, 11-12. [\[BACK\]](#)
  28. Berger, "Mission to the Jews."
    29. Ibid., 584. Quote is from *Écrits théologiques de l'école d'Abélard*, ed. Arthur M. Landgraf (Louvain, 1934), 126-127. [\[BACK\]](#)
    28. Berger, "Mission to the Jews."
      29. Ibid., 584. Quote is from *Écrits théologiques de l'école d'Abélard*, ed. Arthur M. Landgraf (Louvain, 1934), 126-127. [\[BACK\]](#)
      30. Berger, "Mission to the Jews," pp. 584-585. On Joachim in general, see Marjorie Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore and the Prophetic Future* (London, 1976). [\[BACK\]](#)
      31. Berger, "Mission to the Jews," 584. On Peter in general, see James Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam* (Princeton, 1964). [\[BACK\]](#)
      32. Berger, "Mission to the Jews," 584. See, also, Funkenstein, "Changes in the Patterns of Christian Anti-Jewish Polemics," 137-141 , and Yvonne Friedman's introduction to her recent edition of Peter's *Adversus iudeorum inveteratam duritiem* (Turnhout, 1985; *Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Medievalis*, vol. 58). Funkenstein, "Changes in the Patterns of Christian Anti-Jewish Polemics," 142, notes a passage in Alan of Lille in which a rabbinic text is used for establishing Christian truth. The twelfth-century figure most sensitive to the utilization of rabbinic materials, both for holding Judaism up to mockery and for proving major Christian contentions, was Peter Alphonsi, a former Jew. The fullest treatment of his utilization of this material can be found in Barbara Phyllis Hurwitz, "Fidei Causa et Tui Amore: The Role of Petrus Alphonsi's Dialogues in the History of Jewish-Christian Debate" (Ph.D. diss., Yale Univ., 1983), 163-218. [\[BACK\]](#)

## 2— The Thirteenth Century

1. The literature on the twelfth-century vitalization of European civilization has been noted in chap. 1, n. 26. For an overview of thirteenth-century thinking, see John H. Mundy, *Europe in the High Middle Ages, 1150-1309* (New York, 1973), 463-599. Excellent surveys of thirteenth-century England, France, and Spain are available and convey a clear sense of the forward thrust of that century. [\[BACK\]](#)
2. For an overview of thirteenth-century Church organization, see Augustin Fléchier et al., *La chrétienté romaine (1198-1274)* (Paris, 1950; *Histoire de l'Église*, X); Gabriel Le Bras, *Institutions ecclésiastiques de la chrétienté médiévale* (2 vols.; Paris, 1959; *Histoire de l'Église XII*); Walter Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages* (rev. ed.; continue Baltimore, 1970); and R. W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (Hammondsworth, 1970). [\[BACK\]](#)

3. On the development of the universities, see, inter alia, Hastings Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, eds. F. W. Powicke and A. B. Emden (3 vols.; Oxford, 1936), and Gordon Leff, *Paris and Oxford in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (New York, 1968). [\[BACK\]](#)
4. On thirteenth-century spiritual and intellectual creativity, see, inter alia, André Forest, F. van Steenberghe, and M. de Gandillac, *Le mouvement doctrinal du XIe au XIVe siècle* (Paris, 1951), 179-328; Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1952), 196-355; M. D. Chenu, *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas*, trans. Albert M. Landry and Dominic Hughes (Chicago, 1964). [\[BACK\]](#)
5. On the development of heresy at this juncture, see, inter alia, Arno Borst, *Die Katherer* (Stuttgart, 1953); Richard W. Emery, *Heresy and Inquisition in Narbonne* (New York, 1941); Walter W. Wakefield, *Heresy, Crusade, and Inquisition in Southern France, 1100-1250* (Berkeley, 1974); Albert C. Shannon, *The Popes and Heresy in the Thirteenth Century* (Villanova, 1949). [\[BACK\]](#)
6. On the Dominicans and Franciscans, see, inter alia, William A. Hinnebusch, *A History of the Dominican Order* (2 vols.; New York, 1966-1973); Pierre Mandonnet, *St. Dominic and His Work*, trans. Mary Benedicta Larkin (St. Louis, 1944); Marie-Humbert Vicaire, *Saint Dominic and His Times*, trans. Kathleen Pond (London, 1964); R. F. Bennett, *The Early Dominicans* (Cambridge, 1937); John Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order* (Oxford, 1968). [\[BACK\]](#)
7. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission*. See also the valuable work of Robert I. Burns, *Muslims, Christians, and Jews in the Crusader Kingdom of Valencia* (Cambridge, 1984), 80-108. [\[BACK\]](#)
8. See again Kritizeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam*. [\[BACK\]](#)
9. This is emphasized in Burns, *Muslims, Christians, and Jews*. [\[BACK\]](#)
10. See, inter alia, André Berthier, "Les écoles de langues orientales fondées au XIIIe siècle par les Dominicains en Espagne et en Afrique," *Revue africaine* LXXIII (1932): 84-102; Berthold Altaner, "Die fremdsprachliche Ausbildung der Dominikanermissionare während des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts," *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft* XXIII (1933): 233-241; Burns, *Muslims, Christians, and Jews*, 95-105. [\[BACK\]](#)
11. Gavin I. Langmuir had published a number of important studies in this area. See especially his "Prolegomena to Any Present Analysis of Hostility against Jews," *Social Science Information* XV (1976): 698-727, and "Medieval Anti-Semitism," *The Holocaust: Ideology, Bureaucracy, and Genocide*, ed. Henry Friedlander and Sybil Milton (Millwood, 1980), 27-36. [\[BACK\]](#)
12. For a broad perspective, see Baron, *A Social and Religious History*, IX, 24-71. As already noted, Jeremy Cohen has recently argued for a radically new thirteenth-century stance that defined Judaism as essentially intol- soft  
erable. I have come to doubt this thesis, despite my respect for the book and its author. While I shall document my disagreement fully elsewhere, I have indicated, in the closing chapter, my disagreement with Cohen's reading of the central texts associated with the missionizing effort of the mid-thirteenth century. [\[BACK\]](#)
13. For this decree, see J. D. Mansi et al. (eds.), *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* (53 vols.; Florence and Rome, 1757-1927), XXII, 1055. The text is conveniently available in Solomon Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews in the XIIith Century* (rev. ed.; New York, 1966), 308, #X. [\[BACK\]](#)
14. Again, for a broad overview, see Baron, *A Social and Religious History*, IV, 197-215. [\[BACK\]](#)
15. See Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum*, XXII, 1054-1055, and Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, 312, #XIII. [\[BACK\]](#)
16. Many of the materials on which knowledge of the anti-Talmud campaign is based are found in Bib. nat. Paris, ms. lat. 16558. This material is discussed most fully by Ch. Merhavia, *Ha-Talmud be-Re'i ha-Nazrut* \* (Jerusalem, 1970). See also Isidore Loeb, "La controverse de 1240 sur le Talmud," *Revue des études juives* I (1880): 247-261, II (1881): 248-270, III (1881): 39-57; Yitzhak Baer, "The Disputations of R. Yehiel of Paris and of Nahmanides" (Hebrew), *Tarbiz* \* II (1930-31): 172-187; Judah Rosenthal, "The Talmud on Trial," *Jewish Quarterly Review* XLVII (1956-57): 58-76, 145-169. [\[BACK\]](#)
17. This issue is stressed heavily by Jeremy Cohen in *The Friars and the Jews*. I believe that he overlooks the disappearance of this claim in the actual condemnation of the Talmud. [\[BACK\]](#)
18. See Rosenthal, "The Talmud on Trial." [\[BACK\]](#)
19. Baer, "The Disputations of R. Yehiel of Paris and of Nahmanides." [\[BACK\]](#)
20. See the papal letter of 1247, conveniently available in Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, 274-280, #19. [\[BACK\]](#)
21. On the situation in France, see Robert Chazan, *Medieval Jewry in Northern France* (Baltimore, 1974), 124-133, 156-157, 178, 187-188, 202. For the situation elsewhere in Europe, see Baron, *A Social and Religious History*, IX, 67-71. [\[BACK\]](#)
22. On conversion, see, inter alia, Blumenkranz, *Juifs et chrétiens*, 65-211, and Baron, *A Social and Religious History*, IX, 12-24. [\[BACK\]](#)

### **3— Coercion in the Service of Christian Truth**

1. J. Sbaralea, *Bullarium Franciscanum* (4 vols.; Rome, 1759-1768), I, 376, #90; Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, 254-256, #105. [\[BACK\]](#)
2. The *Milhemet Mizvah* \* is found in Bib. pal. Parma, ms. 2749. The fullest description is that of Siegfried Stein, *Jewish-Christian Disputations in Thirteenth-Century Narbonne* (London, 1969). Subsequent to Stein's work, note also Robert Chazan, "A Jewish Plaintiff to Saint Louis," *Hebrew Union* continue

*College Annual* XLV (1974): 287-305; idem, "Anti-Usury Efforts in Thirteenth-Century Narbonne and the Jewish Response," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* XLI-XLII (1973-74): 45-67; idem, "Confrontation in the Synagogue of Narbonne: A Christian Sermon and a Jewish Reply," *The Harvard Theological Review* LXVII (1974): 437-457; Ch. Merhavia, "Concerning the Date of R. Meir ben Simeon's *Milhemet Mizva \**" (Hebrew), *Tarbiz* \* XLV (1976): 296-302; Robert Chazan, "Polemical Themes in the *Milhemet Mizvah*," *Les Juifs au regard de l'histoire: Mélanges en l'honneur de Bernhard Blumenkranz*, ed. Gilbert Dahan (Paris, 1985), 169-184. Significant segments of the text have been edited by William Herskowitz in his Yeshiva University dissertation *Judaean-Christian Dialogue in Provence as Reflected in Milhemet Mizva of R. Meir ha-Meili* (1974) and by M. Y. Blau, *Shitat ha-Kadmonim'al Masekheth Nazir* (New York, 1974), 305-357. [\[BACK\]](#)

3. The dialogue is found in the Parma ms., 1a-17a and 37b-64a, and in Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, 2-25, 102-144. [\[BACK\]](#)

4. See Gerson D. Cohen, "Esau as Symbol in Early Medieval Thought," *Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, ed. Alexander Altman (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), 19-48. [\[BACK\]](#)

5. Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, p. 2.

6. Ibid., 4.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., 3.

10. Ibid., 2-3. [\[BACK\]](#)

5. Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, p. 2.

6. Ibid., 4.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., 3.

10. Ibid., 2-3. [\[BACK\]](#)

5. Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, p. 2.

6. Ibid., 4.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., 3.

10. Ibid., 2-3. [\[BACK\]](#)

5. Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, p. 2.

6. Ibid., 4.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., 3.

10. Ibid., 2-3. [\[BACK\]](#)

5. Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, p. 2.

6. Ibid., 4.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., 3.

10. Ibid., 2-3. [\[BACK\]](#)

5. Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, p. 2.

6. Ibid., 4.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., 3.

10. Ibid., 2-3. [\[BACK\]](#)

11. Ezek. 449. [\[BACK\]](#)

12. Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, p. 4. [\[BACK\]](#)

13. Isa. 54:5.

14. Ibid., 62:5. [\[BACK\]](#)

13. Isa. 54:5.
14. Ibid., 62:5. [[BACK](#)]
15. Hos. 2:7 and 2:4.
16. Ibid., 2:21-22. The translation has been modified slightly. [[BACK](#)]
15. Hos. 2:7 and 2:4.
16. Ibid., 2:21-22. The translation has been modified slightly. [[BACK](#)]
17. Isa. 54:6-7. [[BACK](#)]
18. Herskowitz, 3-4. [[BACK](#)]
19. The original scholarly edition of Nahmanides's report on the Barcelona proceedings, by Moritz Steinschneider, was reprinted by Chaim Chavel as part of his comprehensive collection of the writings of Nahmanides and is more conveniently available there. See Chaim Chavel, *Kitvei Rabbenu Moshe ben Nabman* \* (rev. ed.; 2 vols.; Jerusalem, 1971), I, 303. Steinschneider miscopied the Constantinople edition, resulting in the strange reading:

**כִּי מֵאָז שָׁהַלְךָ בְּפֶרְבִּינְצִיהָ וּבָמִקּוֹמוֹת רַבִּים**

[[Full Size](#)]

(since the king was in Provence and in many places). In fact, the Constantinople edition and a series of manuscripts all read: break

**כִּי מֵאָז שָׁהַלְךָ בְּפֶרְבִּינְצִיהָ וּבָמִקּוֹמוֹת רַבִּים**

[[Full Size](#)]

- (since he [i.e., Friar Paul] journeyed in Provence and in many places). Cf. Ms. Cambridge, Add. 1224, 12b; Ms. Parma 127, 1b; Ms. Florence 24, 2b; Ms. Paris 334, 234b; Ms. Oxford 2408, 58a; Ms. Jewish Theological Seminary, Coll. Adler 1793, 170a. [[BACK](#)]
20. Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, 25. [[BACK](#)]
21. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 320, 319-320. [[BACK](#)]
22. The text of this important bull can be found in Cesare Baronio and Odorico Rinaldi, *Annales ecclesiastici* (34 vols.; Bar-le-Duc, 1864-1883), XXII, 444-445. There are a number of references to dissemination of this bull—see Jules Gay (ed.), *Les registres de Nicolas III* (1277-1280) (Paris, 1938), 408, #965 (Aug. 4, 1278); 408, #966 (Aug. 4, 1278); 411, #1004 (late Dec. 1278). [[BACK](#)]
23. This document is referred to in Jean Régné's valuable catalog of documents relative to the Jews of Aragon, first published in the *Revue des études juives*, LX-LXXVIII, and recently republished as *The History of the Jews in Aragon: Regesta and Documents 1213-1327*, ed. Yom Tov Assis (Jerusalem, 1978). I shall refer to these documents by Régné's numbers. This document is #723. The edict was edited in *Colección de documentos inéditos del archivo general de la Corona de Aragon* (47 vols.; Barcelona, 1847-1877), VI, 194. [[BACK](#)]
24. Régné, #731-736, 746-748. [[BACK](#)]
25. Bib. nat., fonds Dupuy, vol. 532, 79r. [[BACK](#)]
26. Léopold Delisle, "Notes sur quelques mss. du Musée britannique," *Mémoires de la société de l'histoire de Paris* IV (1877): 189. [[BACK](#)]
27. *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Edward I, A.D. 1272-1307* (4 vols.; London, 1893-1901), 1, 356. [[BACK](#)]
28. Régné, #723; *Colección de documentos inéditos*, VI, 194. [[BACK](#)]
29. Heinrich Denifle, "Quellen zur Disputation Pablos Christiani mit Mose Nachmani zu Barcelona 1263," *Historisches Jahrbuch des Görres Gesellschaft* VIII (1887): 234-235.
30. Ibid., 235-236.
31. Ibid., 237. [[BACK](#)]
29. Heinrich Denifle, "Quellen zur Disputation Pablos Christiani mit Mose Nachmani zu Barcelona 1263," *Historisches Jahrbuch des Görres Gesellschaft* VIII (1887): 234-235.
30. Ibid., 235-236.
31. Ibid., 237. [[BACK](#)]
29. Heinrich Denifle, "Quellen zur Disputation Pablos Christiani mit Mose Nachmani zu Barcelona 1263," *Historisches Jahrbuch des Görres Gesellschaft* VIII (1887): 234-235.
30. Ibid., 235-236.
31. Ibid., 237. [[BACK](#)]
32. Adolf Neubauer, "Literary Gleanings IX," *Jewish Quarterly Review* (o.s.) V (1892-1893): 714. [[BACK](#)]

## 4— Intensification of Prior Argumentation

1. On the *Milhemet \* Mizvah \**, its editions, and the secondary literature available, see chap. 3, n. 2. [\[BACK\]](#)
2. Bib. pal. Parma, ms. 2749, 1a-83a; Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, 2-239. break [\[BACK\]](#)
3. Blau, *Shitat ha-Kadmonim*, 305. [\[BACK\]](#)
4. Bib. pal. Parma, ms. 2749, 83a-129b; Blau, *Shitat ha-Kadmonim*, 305-357. [\[BACK\]](#)
5. Bib. pal. Parma, ms. 2749, 129b-179b.
  6. Ibid., 179b-252a. [\[BACK\]](#)
5. Bib. pal. Parma, ms. 2749, 129b-179b.
  6. Ibid., 179b-252a. [\[BACK\]](#)
7. Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, 108-109. [\[BACK\]](#)
8. The *Sefer Yosef ha-Mekane* has been edited by Judah Rosenthal (Jerusalem, 1970). [\[BACK\]](#)
9. The *Sefer Nizahon \* Yashan* has been carefully edited by David Berger, who also provided an English translation and excellent comments and introduction—see Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate*. Note further the edition by Mordechai Breuer (Jerusalem, 1978). Berger's extensive comments serve as the best available guide to recurrent polemical themes and will be cited extensively in my notes. [\[BACK\]](#)
10. Thomas Aquinas, *Opera omnia*, diverse editors (48 vols.; Rome, 1882-1971), XIII, 6. An English translation is available in Thomas Aquinas, *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith: The Summa Contra Gentiles*, trans. Anton C. Pegis et al. (4 bks. in 5; Garden City, 1955-1957). There is substantial debate over the true objectives of the *Summa contra gentiles*. See the convenient summary statement by Pegis, in Book I of the translation just noted, pp. 20-26, and M.-D. Chenu, *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas*, trans. A.-M. Landry and D. Hughes (Chicago, 1964), 288-292. [\[BACK\]](#)
11. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 320. [\[BACK\]](#)
12. See Chazan, "A Jewish Plaint to Saint Louis," and "Anti-Usury Efforts in Thirteenth-Century Narbonne." [\[BACK\]](#)
13. Blau, *Shitat ha-Kadmonim*, 305. [\[BACK\]](#)
14. Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, 19. [\[BACK\]](#)
15. Exod. 23:2. [\[BACK\]](#)
16. Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, 139. [\[BACK\]](#)
17. Josh. 5:2. [\[BACK\]](#)
18. Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, 114. See Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate*, 254, comm. to p. 65, lines 14-15, and 266, comm. to p. 81, line 6.
  19. Ibid., 65. [\[BACK\]](#)
18. Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, 114. See Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate*, 254, comm. to p. 65, lines 14-15, and 266, comm. to p. 81, line 6.
  19. Ibid., 65. [\[BACK\]](#)
20. Deut. 17:8-12. [\[BACK\]](#)
21. Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, pp. 65-67. [\[BACK\]](#)
22. T. B., Sanhedrin, 90a. [\[BACK\]](#)
23. Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, pp. 67-70. See Berger, 324, comm. to p. 199, lines 25-26. [\[BACK\]](#)
24. Zech. 9:10. [\[BACK\]](#)
25. Ps. 72:8. [\[BACK\]](#)
26. Isa. 60:12. [\[BACK\]](#)
27. Zeph. 3:9. break [\[BACK\]](#)
28. Isa. 2:4. [\[BACK\]](#)
29. Zech. 9:10. [\[BACK\]](#)
30. Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, 112-113; cf. ibid., 109-110.
  31. Ibid., 113. [\[BACK\]](#)
30. Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, 112-113; cf. ibid., 109-110.
  31. Ibid., 113. [\[BACK\]](#)
32. Zeph. 3:9. [\[BACK\]](#)
33. Lev. 26:32. [\[BACK\]](#)
34. Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, 73-74. [\[BACK\]](#)
35. Prov. 3:17. [\[BACK\]](#)

36. Gen. 1:1. [\[BACK\]](#)
37. Exod. 34:7. [\[BACK\]](#)
38. Blau, *Shitat ha-Kadmonim*, 306-307. [\[BACK\]](#)
39. Ps. 121:4. [\[BACK\]](#)
40. Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, 68. For a review of Jewish objections to the doctrine of Incarnation, see Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate*, 350-354.
41. Ibid., 306-307. [\[BACK\]](#)
40. Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, 68. For a review of Jewish objections to the doctrine of Incarnation, see Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate*, 350-354.
41. Ibid., 306-307. [\[BACK\]](#)
42. Job 34:10; Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, 10. See Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate*, 312, comm. to p. 171, line 33.
43. Ibid., 11. [\[BACK\]](#)
42. Job 34:10; Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, 10. See Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate*, 312, comm. to p. 171, line 33.
43. Ibid., 11. [\[BACK\]](#)
44. Blau, *Shitat ha-Kadmonim*, 307-308. See Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate*, 23, n. 60, and 339, comm. to p. 223, line 32.
45. Ibid., 308-309. [\[BACK\]](#)
44. Blau, *Shitat ha-Kadmonim*, 307-308. See Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate*, 23, n. 60, and 339, comm. to p. 223, line 32.
45. Ibid., 308-309. [\[BACK\]](#)
46. Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, 20. See the material in Berger cited above, chap. 1, n. 25. [\[BACK\]](#)
47. Lev. 26:33. [\[BACK\]](#)
48. Deut. 28:49.
49. Ibid., 32:21. [\[BACK\]](#)
48. Deut. 28:49.
49. Ibid., 32:21. [\[BACK\]](#)
50. Dan., 8:12
51. Ibid., 8:10. [\[BACK\]](#)
50. Dan., 8:12
51. Ibid., 8:10. [\[BACK\]](#)
52. Ps. 85:12. [\[BACK\]](#)
53. Isa. 2:3; Mic. 4:2. [\[BACK\]](#)
54. Jer. 31:33. [\[BACK\]](#)
55. Isa. 11:9. [\[BACK\]](#)
56. Jer. 10:10.
57. Ibid., 16:19. [\[BACK\]](#)
56. Jer. 10:10.
57. Ibid., 16:19. [\[BACK\]](#)
58. Zeph. 3:9; Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, 19-20. [\[BACK\]](#)
59. Isa. 51:7.
60. Ibid., 51:8.
61. Ibid., 19:2. [\[BACK\]](#)
59. Isa. 51:7.
60. Ibid., 51:8.
61. Ibid., 19:2. [\[BACK\]](#)
59. Isa. 51:7.
60. Ibid., 51:8.
61. Ibid., 19:2. [\[BACK\]](#)
62. Ps. 37:15. [\[BACK\]](#)
63. Isa. 7:16.

64. Ibid., 54:17; Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, 63. break [\[BACK\]](#)
63. Isa. 7:16.
64. Ibid., 54:17; Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, 63. break [\[BACK\]](#)

## 5—The Innovative Argumentation

1. For a good overview of Christian awareness and utilization of post-biblical Jewish literature, see Merhaviah, *Ha-Talmud be-Re'i ha-Nazrut* \*. For three twelfth-century figures who show incipient sensitivity to this approach, see above, chap. 1, especially n. 32. In none of these cases, however, is the random usage turned into a consistent technique, as happened in the middle of the thirteenth century. [\[BACK\]](#)
2. Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, 110, citing Num. 15:38. [\[BACK\]](#)
3. Lev. 23:15-16. [\[BACK\]](#)
4. Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, 133. [\[BACK\]](#)
5. Deut. 25:3. The translation has been altered slightly. [\[BACK\]](#)
6. Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, 134. [\[BACK\]](#)
7. T. B., Shabbat, 104a. [\[BACK\]](#)
8. Herskowitz, *Judaean-Christian Dialogue*, 115. For a version of this argument, utilizing the same rabbinic text, see Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate*, 225. [\[BACK\]](#)
9. T. B., Sanhedrin, 98a. [\[BACK\]](#)
10. The text was edited by Marc Saperstein as part of his Ph.D. dissertation, *The Works of R. Isaac b. Yedaiah* (unpub., Harvard Univ., 1977), 479. [\[BACK\]](#)
11. On Friar Paul in general, see Ernest Renan, *Les rabbins français du commencement du quatorzième siècle* (Paris, 1877), 563-569, and Yitzhak Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, trans. Louis Schoffman et al. (2 vols.; Philadelphia, 1961-1968), I, 152-159; Chazan, *Medieval Jewry in Northern France*, 149-153; Jeremy Cohen, "The Mentality of the Medieval Jewish Apostate: Peter Alfonsi, Hermann of Cologne, and Pablo Christiani," *Jewish Apostasy in the Modern World*, ed. Todd Endelman and Jeffrey Gurock (New York, 1987), 35-41. [\[BACK\]](#)
12. The edicts of James I of Aragon can be found in Denifle, "Quellen zur Disputation," 235-236 and 236-237; the edict of Louis IX of France can be found in Bib. nat., fonds Dupuy, vol. 532, 79r, and in Eusèbe de Laurière, *Ordonnances des roys de la troisième race* (22 vols.; Paris, 1723-1849), I, 294; the letter of Pope Clement IV can be found in Denifle, "Quellen zur Disputation," 243-244. [\[BACK\]](#)
13. See, for example, the Latin report of the Barcelona disputation in ibid., 231-234, or in Baer, "The Disputation of R. Yehiel of Paris and of Nahmanides," 185-187, and a Latin report on Friar Paul's preaching in Paris in Delisle, "Notes sur quelques mss.," 189. [\[BACK\]](#)
14. Published in *Yeshurun* VI (1868): 1-34. For the most recent treatment of this letter and its author, see Kenneth R. Stow, "Jacob of Venice and the Jewish Settlement in Venice in the Thirteenth Century," *Community and Culture*, ed. Nahum M. Waldman (Philadelphia, 1987), 221-232. [\[BACK\]](#)
15. This source will be treated extensively in chap. 6. break [\[BACK\]](#)
16. See, for example, the report published by Adolf Neubauer, "Literary Gleanings IX," *Jewish Quarterly Review* (o.s.), V (1892-93): 714. [\[BACK\]](#)
17. Isaac Lattes's *Kiryat Sefer*. The passage on Friar Paul is conveniently available in Adolf Neubauer, *Medieval Hebrew Chronicles* (2 vols.; Oxford, 1895), II, 238. [\[BACK\]](#)
18. *Yeshurun* VI (1868): 12-23. On the disinterring of Jewish corpses, see the valuable study by Joseph Shatzmiller, "Paulus Christianus: un aspect de son activité anti-juive," *Hommages à Georges Vajda*, ed. Gérard Nahon and Charles Touati (Louvain, 1980), 203-217. [\[BACK\]](#)
19. On Friar Paul's role in the imposition of the Jewish badge in southern Europe, see the important observations of Joseph Shatzmiller, "Provençal Chronography in the Lost Pamphlet of Shem-Tov Schanzolo" (Hebrew), *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* LII (1985): Heb. sec., 45-48 and 60-61. [\[BACK\]](#)
20. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 303. On the proper reading of this text, see chap. 3, n. 19. [\[BACK\]](#)
21. There is considerable scholarly literature on the Barcelona confrontation. For some of this literature, see Robert Chazan, "The Barcelona 'Disputation' of 1263: Christian Missionizing and Jewish Response," *Speculum* LII (1977): 824, n. 1. To this list should be added the Chazan article; Hans Georg von Mutius, *Die Christlich-Jüdische Zwangsdiskussion zu Barcelona* (Frankfurt, 1982); Hyam Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial* (Rutherford, 1982); the important review by David Berger in *Jewish Quarterly Review* LXXVI (1986): 253-257; and the extensive treatment of the 1263 confrontation in Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*. For the centrality of Barcelona in the kingdom of Aragon, see Bonner, *Selected Works of Ramon Llull*, I, 6. [\[BACK\]](#)
22. This report survives in two manuscripts. Denifle used the Barcelona ms., "Quellen zur Disputation," 231-234. The Gerona version is conveniently available in Baer, "The Disputation of R. Yehiel of Paris and of Nahmanides," 185-187. [\[BACK\]](#)

23. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 302-320. No less than four English translations of this important text are available: Morris Braude, *Conscience on Trial* (New York, 1952), 69-94; o.s. Rankin, *Jewish Religious Polemics* (Edinburgh, 1956), 178-210; Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial*, 102-146; and Ramban, *The Disputation at Barcelona*, trans. Charles B. Chavel (New York, 1983). See, also, the German translation of von Mutius in his *Die Christlich-Jüdische Zwangsdiskussion zu Barcelona*. [\[BACK\]](#)
24. Martin A. Cohen, "Reflections on the Text and Context of the Disputation of Barcelona," *Hebrew Union College Annual* XXXV (1964): 157-192. [\[BACK\]](#)
25. Baer, "The Disputations of R. Yehiel of Paris and of Nahmanides," 185. [\[BACK\]](#)
26. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 302. break
27. Ibid. [\[BACK\]](#)
26. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 302. break
27. Ibid. [\[BACK\]](#)
28. It is not clear who singled out Nahmanides as the Jewish spokesman. According to the Latin text, the Jews assembled by the king selected him; in his Hebrew report, Rabbi Moses has the king directly ordering him to dispute. [\[BACK\]](#)
29. Baer, "The Disputations of R. Yehiel of Paris and of Nahmanides," 185. [\[BACK\]](#)
30. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 303.
31. Ibid., 310. See Cohen, "Reflections on the Text and Context," 166. [\[BACK\]](#)
30. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 303.
31. Ibid., 310. See Cohen, "Reflections on the Text and Context," 166. [\[BACK\]](#)
32. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 303.
33. Ibid., 308.
34. Ibid., 311.
35. Ibid., 316. [\[BACK\]](#)
32. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 303.
33. Ibid., 308.
34. Ibid., 311.
35. Ibid., 316. [\[BACK\]](#)
32. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 303.
33. Ibid., 308.
34. Ibid., 311.
35. Ibid., 316. [\[BACK\]](#)
32. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 303.
33. Ibid., 308.
34. Ibid., 311.
35. Ibid., 316. [\[BACK\]](#)
36. See the materials gathered and the literature cited in Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate*, 248-252, comm. on pp. 60-62. [\[BACK\]](#)
37. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 304. According to Nahmanides' own account, Friar Paul was careful to use the term *koah* \* (power) and *memshalah* (authority), while Rabbi Moses insisted on using the term *melukhah* (kingship).
38. Ibid. Note the emphasis on *melukhah*. See the parallel sources cited in Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate*, 249, comm. to p. 60, lines 28-29. [\[BACK\]](#)
37. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 304. According to Nahmanides' own account, Friar Paul was careful to use the term *koah* \* (power) and *memshalah* (authority), while Rabbi Moses insisted on using the term *melukhah* (kingship).
38. Ibid. Note the emphasis on *melukhah*. See the parallel sources cited in Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate*, 249, comm. to p. 60, lines 28-29. [\[BACK\]](#)
39. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 304. The seventy years of Babylonian exile serve to illustrate lack of kingship entirely; the three hundred eighty years of priestly rule illustrate the existence of royal power without its being lodged in the tribe of Judah. According to Nahmanides, neither contradicts the true meaning of the verse. [\[BACK\]](#)
40. T. B., Sanhedrin, 5a. [\[BACK\]](#)
41. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 304.
42. Ibid., 307.
43. Ibid. See the materials gathered and the literature cited in Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate*, 283, comm. on pp. 114-116. For an interesting perspective, see Joel E. Rembaum, "The Development of the Jewish Exegetical Tradition regarding Isaiah 53," *Harvard Theological Review* LXXV (1982): 289-311. [\[BACK\]](#)
41. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 304.

42. Ibid., 307.
43. Ibid. See the materials gathered and the literature cited in Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate*, 283, comm. on pp. 114-116. For an interesting perspective, see Joel E. Rembaum, "The Development of the Jewish Exegetical Tradition regarding Isaiah 53," *Harvard Theological Review* LXXV (1982): 289-311. [\[BACK\]](#)
41. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 304.
42. Ibid., 307.
43. Ibid. See the materials gathered and the literature cited in Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate*, 283, comm. on pp. 114-116. For an interesting perspective, see Joel E. Rembaum, "The Development of the Jewish Exegetical Tradition regarding Isaiah 53," *Harvard Theological Review* LXXV (1982): 289-311. [\[BACK\]](#)
44. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 306, citing T. P., Berakhot, 17a-b.
45. Ibid., 307, citing T. B., Sanhedrin, 98a. [\[BACK\]](#)
44. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 306, citing T. P., Berakhot, 17a-b.
45. Ibid., 307, citing T. B., Sanhedrin, 98a. [\[BACK\]](#)
46. Baer, "The Disputations of R. Yehiel of Paris and of Nahmanides," 185. [\[BACK\]](#)
47. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 303. [\[BACK\]](#)
48. Chazan, "The Barcelona 'Disputation' of 1263," 831-832. [\[BACK\]](#)
49. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 311. In his *Judaism on Trial*, 120-121, Maccoby poses a significant issue. He notes that "all commentators have understood N. to say at this point that there has never been anyone apart from Jesus who claimed the Messiahship." Maccoby then indicates talmudic references to Bar Kokhba and suggests that the text cannot be read in this traditional way. continue
- What he proposes instead is an emendation that results in: "So far there has never been any other man (leaving aside Jesus) who has claimed to be the Messiah (or has had that claim made for him) in whose Messiahship it is possible for me to believe." While ingenious, this suggestion is ultimately untenable. The Hebrew *zulati* is substantially weakened by the translation "(leaving aside Jesus)." Maccoby's reading would result in Nahmanides' saying that there had been no messianic claimant in whom he could believe *except Jesus*, and that is unthinkable. What the passage simply means is that there had been no one who had claimed the mantle of the Messiah and whose claims had been widely accepted *except for Jesus*. While Bar Kokhba (and others) had made the claim and while he had received some support, this support was hardly widespread enough to qualify. [\[BACK\]](#)
50. Baer, "The Disputations of R. Yehiel of Paris and of Nahmanides," 186. [\[BACK\]](#)
51. On this point, I disagree with Baer, "The Disputations of R. Yehiel and of Nahmanides," 180, who sees in this statement an outright lie. The way Nahmanides' ploy is reported in the Latin text makes it clear that this was a dangerous strategem to use. [\[BACK\]](#)
52. Jeremy Cohen interprets the Christian argumentation at Barcelona in a way that reinforces his contention of a new ecclesiastical view of Judaism. For my disagreement, see chap. 9. [\[BACK\]](#)
53. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 319-320. [\[BACK\]](#)
54. Denifle, "Quellen zur Disputation," 235-236. [\[BACK\]](#)
55. See chap. 3, and Chazan, *Medieval Jewry in Northern France*, 150-153. [\[BACK\]](#)

## 6—Jewish Responses to the New Argumentation

1. Saperstein, *The Works of R. Isaac b. Yedaiah*, 479-480.
2. Ibid., 481-482.
3. Ibid., 483-484. [\[BACK\]](#)
1. Saperstein, *The Works of R. Isaac b. Yedaiah*, 479-480.
2. Ibid., 481-482.
3. Ibid., 483-484. [\[BACK\]](#)
1. Saperstein, *The Works of R. Isaac b. Yedaiah*, 479-480.
2. Ibid., 481-482.
3. Ibid., 483-484. [\[BACK\]](#)
4. On the Tortosa disputation, see Baron, *A Social and Religious History*, IX, 87-94, and Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, II, 170-243. [\[BACK\]](#)
5. On Rabbi Moses, see the recent collection of valuable essays edited by Isadore Twersky, *Rabbi Moses Nahmanides (Ramban) : Explorations in His Religious and Literary Virtuosity* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), and the literature cited there, 1, n. 1. [\[BACK\]](#)
6. Twersky, *Rabbi Moses Nahmanides*, 3. [\[BACK\]](#)

7. On these incidents and the role of Rabbi Moses, see Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, I, 96-110, and Daniel Jeremy Silver, *Maimonidean Criticism and the Maimonidean Controversy*, 1180-1240 (Leiden, 1965); David Berger, *Nahmanides' Attitude toward Secular Learning and continue*

*Its Bearing on His Stance during the Maimonidean Controversy* (unpub. masters thesis; Columbia Univ., 1965); Azriel Shohat, "Concerning the First Controversy on the Writings of Maimonides" (Hebrew), *Zion* XXXVI (1971): 27-60. [\[BACK\]](#)

8. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 305. [\[BACK\]](#)

9. Isa. 52:13. [\[BACK\]](#)

10. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 311. [\[BACK\]](#)

11. Sifre, Nizavim \* , 308. [\[BACK\]](#)

12. T. B., Hullin, 91b. [\[BACK\]](#)

13. II Chron. 17:6. [\[BACK\]](#)

14. Exod. 8:16. [\[BACK\]](#)

15. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 312.

16. Ibid., 303.

17. Ibid. [\[BACK\]](#)

15. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 312.

16. Ibid., 303.

17. Ibid. [\[BACK\]](#)

15. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 312.

16. Ibid., 303.

17. Ibid. [\[BACK\]](#)

18. Baer, "The Disputations of R. Yehiel of Paris and of Nahmanides," 186. See the discussion above, in chap. 5. [\[BACK\]](#)

19. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 306. For the Jewish dating of Jesus two centuries prior to the destruction of the Second Temple, see Abraham ibn Daud, *Sefer ha-Qabbalah*, ed. Gerson D. Coehn (Philadelphia, 1967), 15-16 (Hebrew text) and 20-21 (English translation). Rabbi Moses rebuts in similar fashion the proof advanced from Gen. 49:10 and rabbinic exegesis on that verse—see Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 305. [\[BACK\]](#)

20. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 306. [\[BACK\]](#)

21. Zech. 9:10. [\[BACK\]](#)

22. Jer. 31:34. [\[BACK\]](#)

23. Isa. 11:9.

24. Ibid., 2:4.

25. Ibid., 11:4. The translation has been altered to fit the sense of the midrash. [\[BACK\]](#)

23. Isa. 11:9.

24. Ibid., 2:4.

25. Ibid., 11:4. The translation has been altered to fit the sense of the midrash. [\[BACK\]](#)

23. Isa. 11:9.

24. Ibid., 2:4.

25. Ibid., 11:4. The translation has been altered to fit the sense of the midrash. [\[BACK\]](#)

26. *Midrash Tehilim*, ed. Solomon Buber (Vilna, 1891), 13a. [\[BACK\]](#)

27. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 311.

28. Ibid., 306.

29. Ibid., 308. [\[BACK\]](#)

27. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 311.

28. Ibid., 306.

29. Ibid., 308. [\[BACK\]](#)

27. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 311.

28. Ibid., 306.

29. Ibid., 308. [\[BACK\]](#)

30. Baer, "The Disputations of R. Yehiel of Paris and of Nahmanides," 187. [\[BACK\]](#)

31. Bernard Septimus, "'Open Rebuke and Concealed Love': Nahmanides and the Andalusian Tradition," in *Rabbi Moses Nahmanides*, 12-13.

32. Ibid., 21-22. [\[BACK\]](#)

31. Bernard Septimus, " 'Open Rebuke and Concealed Love': Nahmanides and the Andalusian Tradition," in *Rabbi Moses Nahmanides*, 12-13.
32. Ibid., 21-22. [\[BACK\]](#)
33. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 308.
34. Ibid., 306. [\[BACK\]](#)
33. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 308.
34. Ibid., 306. [\[BACK\]](#)
35. Baer, "The Disputations of R. Yehiel of Paris and of Nahmanides," 187; Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 316.
36. Ibid., 319.
37. Ibid., 309-310. break [\[BACK\]](#)
35. Baer, "The Disputations of R. Yehiel of Paris and of Nahmanides," 187; Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 316.
36. Ibid., 319.
37. Ibid., 309-310. break [\[BACK\]](#)
35. Baer, "The Disputations of R. Yehiel of Paris and of Nahmanides," 187; Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 316.
36. Ibid., 319.
37. Ibid., 309-310. break [\[BACK\]](#)
38. Judah Rosenthal, "A Religious Disputation between a Scholar Named Menahem and the Apostate and Dominican Friar Pablo Christiani" (Hebrew), *Hagut Ivrit ba-Amerika* III (1974): 62. For further details, see Joel E. Rembaum, "A Reevaluation of a Medieval Polemical Manuscript," *AJS Review* V (1980): 81-99, and Robert Chazan, "A Medieval Hebrew Polemical Mélange," *Hebrew Union College Annual* LI (1980): 89-110. [\[BACK\]](#)
39. It is worth noting in passing the later explicit repudiation of Nahmanides' position by Isaac Abravanel—see his *Sefer Yeshu'ot Meshilo* \* (Konigsberg, 1861), 17a-b. [\[BACK\]](#)
40. Later in the century, in the mid-1280s, the Latin account of a disputation in Majorca makes reference to the earlier Barcelona confrontation. The Christian participant asks whether there is a record available of the earlier Barcelona discussion and is told that the record is extant and is disseminated widely throughout the Jewish world. See Ora Limor, *The Disputation of Majorca 1286: A Critical Edition and Introduction* (2 vols.; Jerusalem, 1984), II, 54. [\[BACK\]](#)
41. The *Mahazik Emunah* is available in one sole manuscript, Ms. Vat. 271. It has been described at length in Renan, *Les rabbins français*, pp. 565-569. Brief sections were transcribed by Abraham Berliner in *Ha-Mazkir* XVI (1876): 42-43. [\[BACK\]](#)
42. Isa. 44:18. [\[BACK\]](#)
43. Isa. 59:19. [\[BACK\]](#)
44. *Mahazik Emunah*, 2d.

והודיעו אליו משפט כל מוסגר כך עשו, ככל היוצא מדלתי ביתו החוצה רמו בראשו, ויצו לסתום קצת הפחים בסיד ובאבניים ומקצתם להיות כבריחי ברול נזונים, כי שם היה ולא נשתה עצמה. טח מראות עיניהם מהשכל לבותם. והיו הפחים פתוחים לרוחה, וכראותינו הארכיכים מצאו מרגוע ומנוחה. ויהי בהיותם בכחית לדאה, שם קבלתי יסורים מהאהבה, כי למען חסדו רוח חדשה בקרבי ורוח ה' נסחה ב'. סימתי ספר והגהתו, אל הפעל הביאתיו, וקראתנו ספר מחזיק אמונה, להיות נכון לוידעני בינה, כי ביארתי הדברים הנסתרים וחילקו לשלש עשרה שערם.

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- [\[BACK\]](#)
45. At this point, a number of lines are illegible. [\[BACK\]](#)
46. I have not been able to decipher this word. [\[BACK\]](#)
47. Again, a number of lines are illegible. [\[BACK\]](#)
48. *Mahazik Emunah*, 3a-c. break

השער הראשון להוכחה כי גליות נאם' לישראל בין הכתמים ואחת גלוות שאנו בו היום. באתרי להוכחה כי אחר שנגורה גזירה עליינו זאת הגלות הארוכה ועודינו בה, מפוזרים בין האומות. אם כן לא בא המשיח [לקבץ] נדרשו:

השער שני להוכחה כי גנור להיות זה הגלות ארוכה משאר גלוות. אם כן אין פלא בעקבות משיח כי לא בא עתו, ולעתה רק יבא לקבץ גדוילים באחרית הימים בדברי הנכאים:

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השער שלישי להוכיח ולחת טעם לאורך הגלות כי מן הדין להיות ארוכה מן כולם. ובעת שיצא משניהם עדין לא גלו ישראל. א"כ העניין ידוע שלא בא המשיח, כי כן נגזר. וכך סתום לגולותינו:

השער הרביעי הבא להוכיח שלל ידי התשובה ימחר הבורא זמן הנגולה. הותה הכוונה לחזק לבנות כי אדם שלא יתיישב באורך הגלות ולא יאמור אבדה תקותינו, וירושו חשובה. וכל זה מוכיחה שלא בא המשיח. וגם הוכחנו בזה השער כי לעת [קץ] יגאלו ישראל אפילו ללא תשובה. אלו בಗלוות, אם כן באמת עדין לא הגיע הקץ ולא בא המשיח:

השער החמישי הבא להוכיח שאין אנו בגלות רק על ביטול המצוות הכתובות בתורה. באתם להרחק אמונה האומרים כי בעון משיחם אנו בגלות ...

השער שישי האומר כי המשיח שנבוא עליו כל הנביאים הוא אדם ולא אל, בא להרחק האמונה ההייא שאומרת כי המשיח בא והוא היה אל ואדם שכבב בשורדים. ואם הדבר אינו כן, כמו שਮוכיחה בזה השער, א"כ אין בדבריהם ממש ולא בא המשיח, כי גם הם מודים שככל הנביאים נבאו המשיח:

השער השכני הבא להוכיח כי המשיח לא בא. וזה השער בא להוכיח עיקרו של דבר, שלא בא גלוות העתידות והאותות והמופתות המוחווים להיותبعثת ההייא כמו עניין גוג ומגוג וענין ... ומפתים רכבים. אם כן עדין המשיח לא בא:

השער השמייני הבא להוכיח אם המשיח נולד או עדין להולד. גם זה השער בא להוכיח כי לא בא, שאם נולד כמו שאם חכם, שנולד ביום החורבן, ולפידבריהם נולד:

קדום החורבן ימים רבים, ואם עתיד להולד איך יבוא קודם שנולד: השער המשיעי הבא להוכיח כי שני המשיחים יבואו לאחרית הימים, משיח בן יוסף ומשיח בן דוד. שנייהם נבאו הנביאים. והם אומרים כי משיחם בא לכדו [לפני] החורבן, א"כ לא בא נבואה הנביאים, ואין חזונותיהם נפרץ, ובכיבת המשיחים לא נתקיים, ותקיים לעת קץ, כי הנביאים לא ישרו ולא יכזבו:

השער העשורי הבא להוכיח כי המשיח שנבאו עליו הנביאים יבא לקץ ישראל ... ואם כן היה צריך משיח לבא לקץ אותו מדר' כנופת הארץ וא"ת על אותו שנשאו בכבול ועל עשרה השבטים אמו, והרי לא קבצם והם עדין בגלוות, וא"כ המשיח לא בא, ריבא באחרית הימים לקבצם:

השער אחד עשר המוכחה כבודן של ישראל ואריכות ימים וחוזק האמונה לימות המשייה. והדברים לא [היו] כימי מישים. לא היה כבוד לישראל ואריכות ימים. גם היום הנה הם מתחים בקצר ימים כמוני. א"כ המשיח שנבאו עליו הנביאים שתהיה בימי כבוד לישראל וחיזוק האמונה ואריכות ימים לא בא עדין ובכואו תתקיימו כל הנבואות והנהמות האלו:

השער [השנים עשר הבא להוכיח מפלת האומות] אשר הגלו אותנו ואשר נשתבעדו לנו בגלות והכשלתם לימות המשיח. א"כ באמת המשיח לא בא ...

השער שלוש עשרה הבא להוכיח שהעולם כמנגו היה ונוגן לימות המשיח. העבודה והמצוות בטילות לימות המשיח. והדבר ידוע כי משיחם חדש דת לעצמו ואמר שהמצוות שהם חוקים היו בטילות בבא משיחם. ושוב לא היו צרכיסム להקריב קרבנות ולא היו עוד נכאים כי נסתמו הנביאים בברואו. אנחנו מוכחים בשער זה ברואות ברורות כי לא דבריהם כן הוא, והתורה והמצוות היו קיימות ונצחית עד עדי עד. וא"כ לא היה זה משיח שבא ועתיד לבא כונתו בע"ה. יראו עינינו וישמח לבינו ובישועתו תgal נפשינו.

מלכני עטר בראשינו בעגלא ובזמן קרייב אמן.

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49. Lev. 26:12. [BACK]

50. This aggadah is found in the *Sifra* to Lev. 26:12; the entire passage is in the *Mahazik \* Emunah*, 16c-d.

על זה כתוב והחלכתי בתוככם مثل מלך שיעז לטיל עם אהבתינו בפרדס והיה אותו אריס מטמר לפניו, א"ל בעל הבית מה לך מטמר מפני הרני כיוצא בך. כך עתיד הך לטיל עם הצדיקים בנ"ע, והצדיקים רואין אותו ומודעאין מפני. והך אמר להן מה אתם מודיעין מפני הרני כיוצא בכם.

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51. *Mahazik Emunah*, 16d.

והארכתי בהגדה זו לפי שהאיש הידוע היה כופר בה על לשון האגדה, שם' הר'.

אתה כירצא בו ר"ל שהמשיח הוא אל' ואדם.

[BACK]

52. We might further note that the fourteenth-century Isaac Lattes, generally well informed on this period, says in his comments on Friar Paul that "at that time [the time of Friar Paul] Rabbi Mordechai ben Joseph was there—he composed against him [Friar Paul] the book *Mahazik Emunah*." See Neubauer, *Medieval Jewish Chronicles*, II, 238. [\[BACK\]](#)

53. Gen. 15:18. [\[BACK\]](#)

54. Deut. 19:8. [\[BACK\]](#)

55. Isa. 2:2. [\[BACK\]](#)

56. I am unable to decipher this word. [\[BACK\]](#)

57. Isa. 2:3. [\[BACK\]](#)

58. Isa. 11:11 [\[BACK\]](#)

59. Isa. 35:3. [\[BACK\]](#)

60. Isa. 35:10. [\[BACK\]](#)

61. Isa. 40:2. [\[BACK\]](#)

62. Isa. 40:29. [\[BACK\]](#)

63. Isa. 40:31. [\[BACK\]](#)

64. Lev. 26:6. [\[BACK\]](#)

65. Isa. 11:6. [\[BACK\]](#)

66. *Mahazik Emunah*, 9c-d. break

השער השביעי להוכחה כי המשיח שנבאו עליו כל הנכאים שבא לקבץ דתוי  
ישראל עדין לא בא וכור' ... חhilah אביה ראה מן התורה שהמשיח עדין לא בא.  
שהבטיחנו הבורא על גאולה שלמה לעתיד, כי בהבטחת ברית בין הכהנים כחוב לזרעך  
נתחי את הארץ הזאת מנהר מצרים ועד הנهر הגדול נהר פרת, ומנה עשר עמים והקדושים  
קנוי וקניזוי וקרדמוני, ואלו הג' לא נתנו לישראל בימי משה ע"ה ובימי יהושע ולא בימי  
דוד. ואיא אפשר לומר שלא הגע זכות לעקר אותם ולקיים הבטחה, שעם הברית  
והשבועה לא היה תנאי כלל כמו שביארנו בשער הראשון. אך כאמור עתיד לבא בימי  
המשיח פרשיות רבות עתידות לבא בהברחה כעדי מקלט ... , שנ' אם יזרובי אלהך את  
גבורך וגורי ויספת לך (עוד) שלוש ערים על השליש האלה, ומועלם לא היה דברזה. ונאמ'  
בנכאות ישועתו והיה באחריות הימים נכן היה הר בית י' בראש ההרים ונשא

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(ה) מגבעות ונהרו אליו כל הגויים. אין זה עתה לא ... אליו כל הגויים ואינו נשא  
(ה) מגבעות כי אחר משיחם בלבד ירושלים ביר' ישמעאלים. ועוד כי מזין תצא חורה  
ודבר י' מירושלים, ואין אנו רואים עתה שיילכו ירושלים לבקש חכמה והוא חביבה  
ושוממה. ועוד נא' יסוף י' שנית ידו לקנות את שאר עמו מבכל ומאשר וממצרים. מי  
הוא וזה אשר פדה מבכל ומשאר ארצות. וווסף ידו שנית ידו קבץ אותם מקומות הארץ  
ויאסוף יהודת וישראל מדי' כנופת העולם,ומי' פדה אותם פעם ראשונה שיפדה אותם  
פעם שנייה כי אם הוא ית'. כי משיחם לא היה עדין, כי המפוזרים בארכע הרוחות הם  
ישראל ויהודיה. ועוד אומר שעשו ידו ידים רפות בכרכיס כשלות אמצו, מי' ידריהם  
ידים רפות בגלות וברכבים כשולות כי אם ירושאל, ובסוף הפרש' הו אומר ופדרוי י'  
ישובו ובאו לציון ברנה. ואור' דברו על לב ירושלים וקרו אליו כי מלאה עצאה כי נרצה  
עונה כי לקחה מיד י' כפלים בכל חטאיהם, ומיהם שלקהו מיד י' כפלים בכל חטאיהם  
כי אם ישראל. ואור' הנוטן ליעף כח ולאין אוננס עצמה ירבה, ומיהו עיף ואין אוננס  
בגלות כי אם אנחנו. ועל מי נא' וקי י' יחליפו כח כי אם עם על החלש אבל מי שיש להם  
כח היום חיליף ויחלש, וכך כל הפרשיות פשוטות, שלא דברו רק על מי שהם שחמי  
היום בירתה הגלות. ואור' בטורה כי בימי המשיח יהיה שלום בארץ ושכחים ואין מחריד.  
ויכן אומ' ישועתו ונגר זאב עם כבש ונמר עם גדי ירבען ורבקה תרעינה ועשעה יונק על  
חר פתן וכור', והיכן מזינו שהיה זה השלום ביום מישים. אך היה ההפק שרכבו מחלוקת  
בארץ וחילוק דעתות וחילוק אמונה.

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67. I am unable to decipher this word. [\[BACK\]](#)

68. Isa. 9:5. [\[BACK\]](#)

69. T. B., Sanhedrin, 94b. [\[BACK\]](#)

70. Exod. 20:2. [\[BACK\]](#)

71. Exod. 20:3. [\[BACK\]](#)

72. Deut. 6:13. [\[BACK\]](#)
73. Deut. 10:20. [\[BACK\]](#)
74. Lev. 19:12. [\[BACK\]](#)
75. Exod. 22:27. [\[BACK\]](#)
76. Leviticus Rabbah, 9:7.
77. Ibid. [\[BACK\]](#)
76. Leviticus Rabbah, 9:7.
77. Ibid. [\[BACK\]](#)
78. Dan. 12:2. [\[BACK\]](#)
79. T. B., Succah, 52a. [\[BACK\]](#)
80. Ps. 104:35. [\[BACK\]](#)
81. I have omitted the digression discussed above. [\[BACK\]](#)
82. Deut. 16:3. [\[BACK\]](#)
83. Jer. 16:14-15; T. B., Berakhot, 12b-13a. [\[BACK\]](#)
84. Gen. 35:10. [\[BACK\]](#)
85. *Mahazik \* Emunah*, 16c-d. break

שער י"ג להוכחה שאין המצוות והקרבנות בטלין לימות המשיח וכיו'. המקום רצה לזכות את ישראל לפיקד הרבה להם תורה ומצוות. והמצוות ניתנו לקיום העולם להרחיק מן הרציחה ומן הניאור ומן הגול וכן המצוות השमניות כמדרונות לעלות בית אל... וכל ימות הארץ צריך להתחסן בקיום העולם ולהוחזק מן היכיור ומן ה... וחכמי התלמיד

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אמרו אין בין העולם הזה לימות המשיח אלא שיעבדו מלכויות בלבד. ובימי חזקיה שהיה מלך צדיק נקרא אבי עד שר שלום החזיקו במצוות יותר מנדירות הראשונים כמו שאמרו בדקנו מדן ועד באשר שבע ולא מצאו חינוך וחינוקת שלא היו בקיין בטומאה וטהרה; גם בימות המשיח שיבא יש להאמין שיש בקיין בטומאה וטהרה ובthora ובמצוות. גם כשתנה תורה בסיני לא נתנה לנון, וכשם שהמצוות תלויות ביראת השם כך אין בטילות בעולם, כגון אנטיכי אליהן, ולא יהיה לך אלהים. "אליהיך תירא, וככן לא תשכעו בשמי לשקר, אלהים לא חקלל, ואhabת את יי' אלהיך" – כל אילו המצוות הכתובות בתורה אין הפרש בינהן ואין בטילות בעולם. ומה שאמר בהגדה ר' יוחנן בשם ר' מנחם דמן גליה כל הקרבנות [בטילים] חוץ מקרבן תודה – ר' ליל מה שאמր בהגדה אחרת לעתידanca כל הקרבנות [בטילים] חוץ מקרבן תודה – ר' ליל לעתידanca כמו לעולם הבא כי ב' זמנים הם. ימות המשיח חילה ויעמדו ימים רביים בארץ ישראל ויריבבו קרבנות ואחר זמן יהיה העולם הבא שייתעדנו הצדיקים בגין עדן ויקבלו שכר ואז תהיה תחיה אחרית, אילו لكבל שכר ואילו ליפרע מהן, ועל אותו העת אמר הנביא רובכם מן ישני עפר יקיצו אלה להחי עולם ואלה לדידראן עולם. ובעת ההיא לא יהיה יצר הרע בעולם כמו שא' ר' ב"ל [במס' ע"ז] לעתידanca לבא מביא יצר הרע ושוחטו לפני הצדיקים לפיקד אין צרכין ליהר מטנית ומן הרציחה ומן הגול וע"כ כי איז יהיו כל הקרבנות בטלין חוץ מקרבן תודה, ר' ליל כי החפילות בטילה של לא יצטרכו עדן. או נוכל לפреш כי אפילו לימות המשיח ר' ליל כי החפילות בטילה של לא יצטרכו לשאול צרכי העולם הזה, כי העולם היה בטובה כל הימים ובלא עמל ויגעה. ואין להם כ"א שבח והודיה לאלהים, וכן לא יהיה חוטאין שיצטרכו לחטאתי ואשם כדכתיב יתמו חטאיהם מן הארץ וגוי... .

אחרור לראייתו של המצוות קיימות לימות המשיח וחכמי התלמיד שנחלקו במס' ברכות בחוזרת יציאת (המשיח) [מצרים] לימות המשיח, וכן בן זומא וחכמים, ואומ' שם: למען חוכור את יום עצהן מארץ מצרים כל ימי חיין. וכי מוצדרין יציאת מצרים לימות המשיח, והלא כבר נאמ' הנה ימים באים נאים יי לא אמר עוד יי' איש העלה אתכם ואשר הביא אתכם צפון. נראה שהיא בדעת בן זומא שאין מוצדרין יציאת מצרים לימות המשיח. והוא מצות עשה. אמרו לנו לא שתעקר מצרים ממקומם. ר' ליל שלא תהיה בטילה לימות המשיח, אלא שתהייה שיעבוד מלכויות עיקר ויציאת מצרים טפילה לו. כיוצא בו אתה אומר לא יקרא עוד שמן יעקב כ"א ישראל יהיה שמן, לא שתעקר שם יעקב ממקומו אלא ישראל יהיה עיקר וייעקב טפל לו.

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For rabbinic materials on this issue, see W. D. Davies, *Torah in the Messianic Age and/or the Age to Come* (Philadelphia, 1952; *Journal of Biblical Literature Monograph Series*), 50-83. For medieval Christian and Jewish perspectives, see Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate*, 355-361. [\[BACK\]](#)

## 7—The Pugio Fidei

1. On Friar Raymond, see André Berthier, "Un maître orientaliste du XIIIe siècle: Raymond Martin, O. P.," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* VI (1936) 267-311, and Tomas and Joaquin Carreras y Artau, *Historia de* continue *la filosofia española* \* (2 vols.; Madrid, 1939-1943), I, 147-170. On Friar Raymond and the Jews, see Reuven Bonfils, "The Image of Judaism in Raymond Martini's *Pugio Fidei*" (Hebrew), *Tarbiz* \* XL (1971); Ina Willi-Plein, "Der *Pugio Fidei* des Raymond Martinis also in exemplar versuch kirchlicher Auseinandersetzung mit dem Judentum," in Ina Willi-Plein and Thomas Willi, *Glaubensdolch und Messiasbeweis* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1980); Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*, 129-169; Robert Chazan, "From Friar Paul to Friar Raymond: The Development of Innovative Missionizing Argumentation," *Harvard Theological Review* LXXVI (1983): 289-306. [\[BACK\]](#)
2. See Berthier, "Un maître orientaliste." [\[BACK\]](#)
3. Jean Régné, *History of the Jews in Aragon: Regesta and Documents*, 1213-1327, ed. Yom Tov Assis (Jerusalem, 1978), 47, #249. [\[BACK\]](#)
4. This work remains unedited. [\[BACK\]](#)
5. The *Pugio Fidei* was published in 1687 in Leipzig; this edition was reprinted in 1967 in Farnborough. Ch. Merhaviah published an interesting note on the Hebrew citations in the Sainte Genevieve manuscript—"The Hebrew Version of the *Pugio Fidei* in the Sainte Genevieve Manuscript" (Hebrew), *Kiryat Sepher* LI (1976): 283-288—and suggested that further study of manuscripts would be most useful. From the examples he provided I have concluded that for the purposes of this analysis, examination of the manuscript versions of the *Pugio Fidei* would be superfluous. [\[BACK\]](#)
6. Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*, 129, n. 2. [\[BACK\]](#)
7. Saul Liebermann, *Shkina* (Jerusalem, 1939), 46. [\[BACK\]](#)
8. For a summary of this debate, see Baron, *A Social and Religious History*, IX, 299, n. 10; see also Chazan, "From Friar Paul to Friar Raymond," 306, n. 60. [\[BACK\]](#)
9. It is striking that in this matter the historical judgment of the talmudist Liebermann was superior to that of the historian of medieval Spanish Jewry, Baer. [\[BACK\]](#)
10. *Pugio Fidei*, 259-478.
  11. Ibid., 482-548.
  12. Ibid., 549-626.
13. Ibid., 627-893. In a famous story found in seven different places in Raymond Lull's writings, Lull criticizes a Christian missionizer, identified by modern scholars as Friar Raymond, for disproving Islam but failing to offer positive proofs for the truth of Christianity. Whether or not this criticism was fair with regard to Friar Raymond's missionizing among the Muslims I leave to others to decide. It is certainly not fair to say that he restricted himself to the negative in mounting his arguments against the Jews. For the Lullian sources, see Bonner, *Selected Works of Ramon Llull*, 56, n. 21, and 96, n. 12.
  14. Ibid., 895-957. [\[BACK\]](#)
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  11. Ibid., 482-548.
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14. Ibid., 895-957. [\[BACK\]](#)
15. See above, chap. 6. [\[BACK\]](#)
16. *Pugio Fidei*, 3.
17. Ibid. break
  18. Ibid., 312-313. [\[BACK\]](#)
16. *Pugio Fidei*, 3.
17. Ibid. break
  18. Ibid., 312-313. [\[BACK\]](#)
16. *Pugio Fidei*, 3.
17. Ibid. break
  18. Ibid., 312-313. [\[BACK\]](#)
19. Ps. 78:67.
20. Ibid., 87:2. [\[BACK\]](#)
19. Ps. 78:67.
20. Ibid., 87:2. [\[BACK\]](#)
21. I Chron. 2:55. [\[BACK\]](#)
22. Deut. 17:10. [\[BACK\]](#)
23. *Pugio Fidei*, 313. While Friar Raymond indicates that this midrash can be found in Bereshit Rabbah, it does not appear in extant versions of this collection. [\[BACK\]](#)
24. The second and briefer quotation adds nothing of substance. [\[BACK\]](#)
25. *Pugio Fidei*, 314, citing T. J., Sanhedrin, 1b. [\[BACK\]](#)
26. *Pugio Fidei*, 314, citing T. B., Sanhedrin, 41a. The biblical verse is Deut. 17:8. There is a longer version of the same report in T. B., 'Avodah Zarah, 8b. [\[BACK\]](#)
27. Recall the objection of Nahmanides that Friar Paul's use of rabbinic exegesis to Gen. 49:10 results in proof that the Messiah came long after Jesus. This objection is obviated by the more sophisticated argumentation of Friar Raymond. [\[BACK\]](#)
28. *Pugio Fidei*, 316, citing T. B., Sanhedrin, 5a. [\[BACK\]](#)
29. *Pugio Fidei*, 316. [\[BACK\]](#)
30. Deut. 1715. [\[BACK\]](#)
31. *Pugio Fidei*, 318, citing T. B., Baba Batra, 3b. [\[BACK\]](#)
32. See above, chap. 6. [\[BACK\]](#)
33. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 307. [\[BACK\]](#)
34. Isa. 10:34. [\[BACK\]](#)
35. *Pugio Fidei*, 348, citing T. P., Berakhot, 17a-b. The biblical citation is Isa. 11:1. [\[BACK\]](#)
36. Isa. 66:7. [\[BACK\]](#)

37. *Pugio Fidei*, 349. The passage, cited from Bereshit Rabbah, is not found in extant versions of this work. [[BACK](#)]

38. *Pugio Fidei*, 350. Again, extant versions of Bereshit Rabbah do not include this story. [[BACK](#)]

39. *Pugio Fidei*, 353, citing Ruth Rabbah, 10a. The biblical quotation is from Mal. 3:16. [[BACK](#)]

40. *Pugio Fidei*, 352.

41. Ibid., 349-350.

42. Ibid., 352.

43. Ibid. This argument is actually the same as that leveled by Rabbi Moses in 1263. [[BACK](#)]

40. *Pugio Fidei*, 352.

41. Ibid., 349-350.

42. Ibid., 352.

43. Ibid. This argument is actually the same as that leveled by Rabbi Moses in 1263. [[BACK](#)]

40. *Pugio Fidei*, 352.

41. Ibid., 349-350.

42. Ibid., 352.

43. Ibid. This argument is actually the same as that leveled by Rabbi Moses in 1263. [[BACK](#)]

40. *Pugio Fidei*, 352.

41. Ibid., 349-350.

42. Ibid., 352.

43. Ibid. This argument is actually the same as that leveled by Rabbi Moses in 1263. [[BACK](#)]

44. It is a bit difficult to understand how these arguments rebut the fourth and fifth of the rabbinic texts cited—the story of Rabbi Joshua ben Levi, Elijah, and the Messiah and the homily on Mal. 3:16. Neither of these two arguments would seem to apply to these texts. It is interesting to note that Abner of Burgos, well grounded in rabbinic literature and committed to its use for proselytizing purposes, had no hesitation in using the homily on Mal. 3:16; he did not seem to share Friar Raymond's concern. See Judah continue

Rosenthal, "The Third Letter of Abner of Burgos" (Hebrew), *Studies in Jewish Bibliography and Booklore* V (1961), Heb. sec., 43. [[BACK](#)]

45. *Pugio Fidei*, 394, citing T. B., Sanhedrin, 97a-b. This passage was earlier cited by Alan of Lille—see above, chap. 5, n. 1. [[BACK](#)]

46. *Pugio Fidei*, 394, citing T. B. 'Avodah Zarrah, 9a. This is a most problematic citation, since extant versions of 'Avodah Zarrah, 9a, read exactly as that in Sanhedrin. [[BACK](#)]

47. *Pugio Fidei*, 395, citing T. B., Sanhedrin, 98a. [[BACK](#)]

48. *Pugio Fidei*, 396, citing T. B., Sanhedrin, 98b. [[BACK](#)]

49. *Pugio Fidei*, 397, citing T. B., Yoma, 10a. [[BACK](#)]

50. *Pugio Fidei*, 396, citing T. B., 'Avodah Zarrah, 8b. [[BACK](#)]

51. *Pugio Fidei*, 397. Once more the supposed source, Bereshit Rabbah, does not offer this quotation in its extant versions. [[BACK](#)]

52. Zech. 2:82. [[BACK](#)]

53. *Pugio Fidei*, 398. Again, the extant versions of Bereshit Rabbah do not include this citation. [[BACK](#)]

54. *Pugio Fidei*, 776-777.

55. Ibid., 777-778.

56. Ibid., 778.

57. Ibid., 778-779.

58. Ibid., p. 780.

59. Ibid., 781, citing T.J., Berakhot, 11b. The biblical verses are Jer. 23:7-8. Recall the references to these passages in the *Mahazik \* Emunah*, noted in the previous chapter. [[BACK](#)]

54. *Pugio Fidei*, 776-777.

55. Ibid., 777-778.

56. Ibid., 778.

57. Ibid., 778-779.

58. Ibid., p. 780.

59. Ibid., 781, citing T.J., Berakhot, 11b. The biblical verses are Jer. 23:7-8. Recall the references to these passages in the *Mahazik \* Emunah*, noted in the previous chapter. [[BACK](#)]

54. *Pugio Fidei*, 776-777.

55. Ibid., 777-778.

56. Ibid., 778.

57. Ibid., 778-779.

58. Ibid., p. 780.

59. Ibid., 781, citing T.J., Berakhot, 11b. The biblical verses are Jer. 23:7-8. Recall the references to these passages in the *Mahazik \* Emunah*, noted in the previous chapter. [\[BACK\]](#)

54. *Pugio Fidei*, 776-777.

55. Ibid., 777-778.

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60. Dan. 7:7. [\[BACK\]](#)

61. *Pugio Fidei*, 788, citing Midrash Tehillim on Ps. 75:11 The biblical verse is Lam. 2:3. [\[BACK\]](#)

62. *Pugio Fidei*, 788.

63. Ibid., 789. [\[BACK\]](#)

62. *Pugio Fidei*, 788.

63. Ibid., 789. [\[BACK\]](#)

64. See above, chap. 6. [\[BACK\]](#)

65. The verse is Hosea 9:12. [\[BACK\]](#)

66. *Pugio Fidei*, 895. [\[BACK\]](#)

67. Hos. 9:15. [\[BACK\]](#)

68. T. B., Yoma, 9b. [\[BACK\]](#)

69. *Pugio Fidei*, 902-903 [\[BACK\]](#)

70. Chavel, *Kitvei*, 1, 305. [\[BACK\]](#)

## 8—Rabbi Solomon ibn Adret and His Responses to the *Pugio Fidei*

1. For an overview, see Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, I, 281-305.

2. See *ibid.*, 289-305. break [\[BACK\]](#)

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2. See *ibid.*, 289-305. break [\[BACK\]](#)

3. For full indication of the numerous places in Lull's writings where the story recurs, see above, chap. 7, n. 13. [\[BACK\]](#)

4. Jeremy Cohen, "The Christian Adversary of Solomon ben Adret," *Jewish Quarterly Review* LXXI (1980-81): 48-55. [\[BACK\]](#)

5. The *Perushei Aggadot* was published by Joseph Perles, *R. Salomo b. Abraham b. Adrath: Sein Leben und Seine Schriften* (Breslau, 1863), Heb. sec., 24-56. See the recent study by Thomas Willi, "Die Perusche Aggadot des R. Salomo ben Adret," in Willi-Plein and Plein, *Glaubensdolch und Messiasbeweis*. [\[BACK\]](#)

6. Perles, *R. Salomo b. Abraham b. Adrath*, 25.  
7. Ibid., 25-26. [[BACK](#)]
6. Perles, *R. Salomo b. Abraham b. Adrath*, 25.  
7. Ibid., 25-26. [[BACK](#)]
8. *She'elot u-Teshuvot ha-Rashba* (Piotrkow, 1883): 53, # 187.  
9. Ibid. For a similar reading of the biblical 'ad, see the treatise of Rabbi Solomon ben Moses, in Judah Rosenthal, *Mehkarim* \* (2 vols.; Jerusalem, 1967), I, 402-403. [[BACK](#)]
8. *She'elot u-Teshuvot ha-Rashba* (Piotrkow, 1883): 53, # 187.  
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10. *She'elot u-Teshuvot ha-Rashba*, 53, # 187.  
11. Ibid. [[BACK](#)]
10. *She'elot u-Teshuvot ha-Rashba*, 53, # 187.  
11. Ibid. [[BACK](#)]
12. Perles, *R. Salomo b. Abraham b. Adrath*, 55.  
13. Ibid., 55-56.  
14. Ibid., 31.  
15. Ibid. [[BACK](#)]
12. Perles, *R. Salomo b. Abraham b. Adrath*, 55.  
13. Ibid., 55-56.  
14. Ibid., 31.  
15. Ibid. [[BACK](#)]
12. Perles, *R. Salomo b. Abraham b. Adrath*, 55.  
13. Ibid., 55-56.  
14. Ibid., 31.  
15. Ibid. [[BACK](#)]
12. Perles, *R. Salomo b. Abraham b. Adrath*, 55.  
13. Ibid., 55-56.  
14. Ibid., 31.  
15. Ibid. [[BACK](#)]
16. Deut. 4:6. [[BACK](#)]
17. Perles, *R. Salomo b. Abraham b. Adrath*, 31.  
18. Ibid., 32.  
19. Ibid., 30. [[BACK](#)]
17. Perles, *R. Salomo b. Abraham b. Adrath*, 31.  
18. Ibid., 32.  
19. Ibid., 30. [[BACK](#)]
17. Perles, *R. Salomo b. Abraham b. Adrath*, 31.  
18. Ibid., 32.  
19. Ibid., 30. [[BACK](#)]
20. For Friar Raymond's categories of Jewish law, see the *Pugio Fidei*, 774-776. [[BACK](#)]
21. Exod. 12:6. [[BACK](#)]
22. T. B., Kiddushin, 42a. [[BACK](#)]
23. Perles, *R. Salomo b. Abraham b. Adrath*, 35.  
24. Ibid. [[BACK](#)]
23. Perles, *R. Salomo b. Abraham b. Adrath*, 35.  
24. Ibid. [[BACK](#)]
25. On this temporary prohibition and its removal, see Deut. 12:20-21 and the discussion in T. B., Hullin \*, 16b.  
26. Ibid.  
27. Ibid., 35-36.  
28. Ibid., 36. [[BACK](#)]

25. On this temporary prohibition and its removal, see Deut. 12:20-21 and the discussion in T. B., Hullin \* , 16b.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid., 35-36.
28. Ibid., 36. [\[BACK\]](#)
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26. Ibid.
27. Ibid., 35-36.
28. Ibid., 36. [\[BACK\]](#)
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26. Ibid.
27. Ibid., 35-36.
28. Ibid., 36. [\[BACK\]](#)
29. Deut. 29:21-24. [\[BACK\]](#)
30. Perles, R. Salomo b. Abraham b. Adrath, 36. [\[BACK\]](#)
31. T. B., Berakhot, 12b. [\[BACK\]](#)
32. Deut. 16:2-3. [\[BACK\]](#)
33. Perles, R. Salomo b. Abraham b. Adrath, 37. This passage is also found in a second work of Rabbi Solomon, *Hidushei \* ha-Rashba 'al aggadot ha-Shas*, ed. Shalom Weinberger Jerusalem, 1966), 30-36. [\[BACK\]](#)
34. Perles, R. Salomo b. Abraham b. Adrath, 38. break [\[BACK\]](#)
35. Deut. 16:1-4. [\[BACK\]](#)
36. Perles, R. Salomo b. Abraham b. Adrath, 38. [\[BACK\]](#)
37. Exod. 23:12 [\[BACK\]](#)
38. Perles, R. Salomo b. Abraham b. Adrath, 39. [\[BACK\]](#)
39. T. B., Yoma, 9b. [\[BACK\]](#)
40. Perles, R. Salomo b. Abraham b. Adrath, pp. 41-412.
41. Ibid., 42.
42. Ibid. The expression is common among medieval Jews. See, e.g., Rashi's commentary to Gen. 45:18. [\[BACK\]](#)
40. Perles, R. Salomo b. Abraham b. Adrath, pp. 41-412.
41. Ibid., 42.
42. Ibid. The expression is common among medieval Jews. See, e.g., Rashi's commentary to Gen. 45:18. [\[BACK\]](#)
40. Perles, R. Salomo b. Abraham b. Adrath, pp. 41-412.
41. Ibid., 42.
42. Ibid. The expression is common among medieval Jews. See, e.g., Rashi's commentary to Gen. 45:18. [\[BACK\]](#)
43. Perles, R. Salomo b. Abraham b. Adrath, 42. [\[BACK\]](#)
44. Ezek. 21:17. I have provided the standard translation. The rabbinic commentary that follows understands the verse somewhat differently.
45. Ibid. The entire discussion can be found in T. B., Yoma, 9B. [\[BACK\]](#)
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45. Ibid. The entire discussion can be found in T. B., Yoma, 9B. [\[BACK\]](#)
46. Perles, R. Salomo b. Abraham b. Adrath, 42-43. [\[BACK\]](#)
- 47 Isa. 92:6. [\[BACK\]](#)
48. Deut. 32:4. [\[BACK\]](#)
49. Ezek. 18:20. Rabbi Solomon has reversed the order of the verse. [\[BACK\]](#)
50. Perles, R. Salomo b. Abraham b. Adrath, 43-44. [\[BACK\]](#)

## 9— Impact and Implications

1. Neubauer, "Literary Gleanings IX." [\[BACK\]](#)
2. Papal letters regarding the Jews from 1198 through 1254 were published and translated by Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews in the XIIIth Century*. Starting with 1240, letters 102, 102A, 105, 124-125, 127, and 128 all refer to issues related to converts from Judaism to Christianity. [\[BACK\]](#)

3. For this material, see Le Nain de Tillemont, *Vie de Saint Louis, roi de France* (6 vols.; Paris, 1847-1851), V, 296-298, and Alexandre Bruel, "Notes de Vyon d'Herouval sur les baptisés et les convers au temps de saint Louis," *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes* XXVIII (1867): 609-621. [\[BACK\]](#)
4. There is a vast twentieth-century literature on Raymond Lull. Two recent publications are extremely valuable in orienting readers to the latest and best in Lullian scholarship. They are J. N. Hillgarth, *Ramon Lull and Lullism in Fourteenth-Century France* (Oxford, 1971), and Bonner, *Selected Works of Ramon Llull*.
- 5. Ibid., I, 15-16.
  - 6. Ibid., 17. [\[BACK\]](#)
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- 5. Ibid., I, 15-16.
  - 6. Ibid., 17. [\[BACK\]](#)
7. Hillgarth, *Ramon Lull and Lullism*, 6. [\[BACK\]](#)
8. See the fine introduction by Bonner to his English translation—Bonner, *Selected Works of Ramon Llull*, I, 93-103. See also the valuable introduction of Armand Llinares to his publication of the medieval French version of the same book (Paris, 1966), 5-24. [\[BACK\]](#)
9. Jose M.ª Millas Vallicrosa, *El "Liber praedicationis contra Judeos" de Ramon Lull* (Madrid, 1957). See the valuable introductory remarks by continue  
the editor and the illuminating review by R. Zvi Werblowsky in *Tarbiz* \* XXXII (1963): 207-211. [\[BACK\]](#)
10. Yitzhak Baer, "Abner of Burgos' *Minhat Kenaot* and Its Influence on Hasdai Crescas" (Hebrew), *Tarbiz* XI (1939-40): 188. See the general presentation of Abner by Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, I, 327-354, and 446, n. 24, for Baer's prior studies and for the materials he utilized. [\[BACK\]](#)
11. See the materials cited by Judah Rosenthal, "Anti-Christian Polemical Literature to the End of the Eighteenth Century" (Hebrew), *Areshet* II (1960): 145-147, #53, 54, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64. [\[BACK\]](#)
12. Robert Chazan, "Maestre Alfonso of Valladolid and the New Missionizing," *Revue des études juives* CXLIII (1984): 83-94. [\[BACK\]](#)
13. Yehuda Shamir, *Rabbi Moses ha-Kohen of Tordesillas and His Book 'Ezer ha-Emunah* (2 vols.; Coconut Grove, 1972), II, 8.  
14. Ibid., 127. [\[BACK\]](#)
13. Yehuda Shamir, *Rabbi Moses ha-Kohen of Tordesillas and His Book 'Ezer ha-Emunah* (2 vols.; Coconut Grove, 1972), II, 8.  
14. Ibid., 127. [\[BACK\]](#)
15. For the fullest presentation of this important event, see Antonio Pacios Lopez, *La Disputa de Tortosa* (2 vols.; Madrid, 1957), I, and Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, II, 170-243. [\[BACK\]](#)
16. Francisco Machado, *The Mirror of the New Christians*, ed. and trans. Mildred Evelyn Vieira and Frank Ephraim Talmage (Toronto, 1977).  
17. Ibid., 29. [\[BACK\]](#)
16. Francisco Machado, *The Mirror of the New Christians*, ed. and trans. Mildred Evelyn Vieira and Frank Ephraim Talmage (Toronto, 1977).  
17. Ibid., 29. [\[BACK\]](#)
18. The book was published in Konigsberg in 1861. Abravanel's life and thought are studied in B. Netanyahu, *Don Isaac Abravanel, Statesman and Philosopher* (2d ed.; Philadelphia, 1968). Note especially the analysis of Abravanel's messianism in 195-247. [\[BACK\]](#)
19. Abravanel, *Yeshu'ot Meshiho* \*, 4a-5a, 16b-17b.  
20. Ibid., 18a, 39a, 47b, 67b. [\[BACK\]](#)
19. Abravanel, *Yeshu'ot Meshiho* \*, 4a-5a, 16b-17b.  
20. Ibid., 18a, 39a, 47b, 67b. [\[BACK\]](#)
21. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission*. [\[BACK\]](#)
22. Marc Saperstein, *Decoding the Rabbis: A Thirteenth-Century Commentary on the Aggadah* (Cambridge, Mass., 1980). [\[BACK\]](#)

23. Amos Funkenstein, "Changes in the Pattern of Anti-Jewish Polemics in the Twelfth Century"; Joel Rembaum, "The Talmud and the Popes: Reflections on the Talmud Trials of the 1240s," *Viator* XIII (1982): 203-223; Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*. [\[BACK\]](#)

24. For a citation of Cohen's thesis, see above, in the introduction.

25. *Ibid.*, 113.

26. *Ibid.*, 114.

27. *Ibid.*, 115. [\[BACK\]](#)

24. For a citation of Cohen's thesis, see above, in the introduction.

25. *Ibid.*, 113.

26. *Ibid.*, 114.

27. *Ibid.*, 115. [\[BACK\]](#)

24. For a citation of Cohen's thesis, see above, in the introduction.

25. *Ibid.*, 113.

26. *Ibid.*, 114.

27. *Ibid.*, 115. [\[BACK\]](#)

24. For a citation of Cohen's thesis, see above, in the introduction.

25. *Ibid.*, 113.

26. *Ibid.*, 114.

27. *Ibid.*, 115. [\[BACK\]](#)

28. Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 303. [\[BACK\]](#)

29. Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*, 114. [\[BACK\]](#)

30. Baer, "The Disputations of R. Yehiel of Paris and of Nahmanides," 185. For the somewhat altered Jewish version of this item, see Chavel, *Kitvei*, I, 303, and the discussion above, chap. 4. [\[BACK\]](#)

31. Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*, 139.

32. *Ibid.*, 140.

33. *Ibid.*, 143. break

34. *Ibid.*, 151.

35. *Ibid.*, 165. [\[BACK\]](#)

31. Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*, 139.

32. *Ibid.*, 140.

33. *Ibid.*, 143. break

34. *Ibid.*, 151.

35. *Ibid.*, 165. [\[BACK\]](#)

31. Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*, 139.

32. *Ibid.*, 140.

33. *Ibid.*, 143. break

34. *Ibid.*, 151.

35. *Ibid.*, 165. [\[BACK\]](#)

31. Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*, 139.

32. *Ibid.*, 140.

33. *Ibid.*, 143. break

34. *Ibid.*, 151.

35. *Ibid.*, 165. [\[BACK\]](#)

31. Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*, 139.

32. *Ibid.*, 140.

33. *Ibid.*, 143. break

34. *Ibid.*, 151.

35. *Ibid.*, 165. [\[BACK\]](#)

36. A convenient edition of the well-known *Constitutio pro Judeis*, provided with an English translation, can be found in Solomon Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews in the Thirteenth Century*, #5, 92-95. Cf. the subsequent reenactments of the same bull in *ibid.*, #35, 144-145; #81, 218-219; #111, 260-261; #118, 274-275. See the classic study by Solomon

Grayzel, "The Papal Bull *Sicut Judeis*," *Studies and Essays in Honor of Abraham A. Neuman*, ed. Meir Ben-Horin et al. (Leiden, 1962), 243-280. [\[BACK\]](#)

37. My disagreement with Cohen's thesis in general and my dissatisfaction with his use of the missionizing campaign in particular do not diminish my regard for the author and the book. I believe that much of the thrust of the study is perceptive and correct. Even the thesis with which I disagree has, it seems to me, been extremely useful in focusing attention on important thirteenth-century developments and sparking renewed consideration of central issues relative to that important epoch. [\[BACK\]](#)

38. Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*, 129-169; Bonfil, "The Nature of Judaism in Raymundus Martini's *Pugio Fidei*. " [\[BACK\]](#)

39. Bonner, *Selected Works of Ramon Llull*, II, 711.

40. Ibid., I, 300-304. [\[BACK\]](#)

39. Bonner, *Selected Works of Ramon Llull*, II, 711.

40. Ibid., I, 300-304. [\[BACK\]](#)

41. I am currently completing a volume on this thirteenth-century decline in its totality, a study that will attempt to identify the major elements in this decline and analyze the factors that brought it about. break [\[BACK\]](#)